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M 168

"BY ELEVEN O'CLOCK I FOUND MYSELF IN THE OPEN STREET"

# Autobiographies of Boyhood

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## INTRODUCTION.

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These autobiographical sketches have been chosen on various considerations, besides their own inherent interest. It is not every writer who is full enough in recollections of his boyhood to supply what we want here; on the other hand, some have expatiated so much on this head that a whole volume might be filled with one story alone. Others, such as Benjamin Franklin, are excluded by appearing elsewhere in our library. We have also kept in view variety of experience and incident. It is hoped, then, that this collection will afford reading both entertaining and profitable, as it must be if it excite the reader's curiosity as to the works of the men with whose youth he is here made acquainted.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF BOYHOOD.

### WILLIAM HUTTON.

[William Hutton's autobiography is one of the best of those many narratives illustrating the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. It was first published in 1816, after his death, then brought into wider notice by Charles Knight, who did so much to aid the efforts of self-educated men like this hero, the "English Franklin" as he has been well called. After Knight's edition, so much as relates to Hutton's boyhood is here reprinted from "this quaint, interesting, and improving specimen of autobiography".]

If I pretend to write from memory, how can I pretend to write things which happened near the time of my birth? Yet this must be granted me. Till the child can walk, he is allowed the hand of another. Whether I tell of myself, or another tells for me, truth shall never quit the page.

I was born September 30, 1723, which will bear the name of the last day in summer, on Wednesday, at a quarter before five in the evening, at the bottom of Full Street, in Derby; upon premises on the banks of the Derwent, now occupied by Mr. Upton, an attorney.

There were no prognostications prior to my birth, except that my father, the day before, was chosen constable. But a circumstance occurred which, I believe, never did before or after—the purchase of a Cheshire cheese, price half-a-guinea; so large as to merit a wheel-barrow to convey it. Perhaps this was the last whole cheese ever bought during my stay. A good painter may seem to give many insignificant strokes,

which, to the observer, amount to nothing; but, taken in the aggregate, they may form a complete picture and a just likeness. As I must have been very little at this time, the reader will excuse me if I talk of little things; though my mother observed, "I was the largest child she ever had, but so very ordinary (a softer word for ugly), she was afraid she should never love me". But whatever were her parental affections then, I had no cause to complain during the nine remaining years of her life.

1725.—Memory now comes in to aid the pen, for this year I recollect many incidents: one, playing upon the verge of the Derwent, with other children, where I am surprised they suffered a child of two years old to remain. Another, playing with my uncle's whip, who had just come from Mountsorrel to see us, and, to close the farce, putting it in the fire, and burning the lash. A third was a dangerous adventure. We infants were playing at the fire, which was large; and, though the least of the flock, I was not the least active. My sister had given me a piece of cap paper, plaited in the form of a fan, in lighting which I set fire to my petticoats, frock, and breeches. My cries brought my mother from the next room, who put an end to the tragi-comedy. My mother afterwards took me with her on a visit to Mountsorrel. While the wagon was crossing the Trent in a barge, a pleasure-boat in view, with the people in it, seemed gradually to sink under water, and rise up alternately. This shows how very delusive is the sight of an infant of two years old. The weather was serene, the water clear, and, though deep, the pebbles at the bottom were visible.

1726.—Every class of the animal world associates with its like. An old couple, Moses Simpson and his wife, who lived at the next door, took great notice of me, but I shunned them with horror: had they been young, I should probably have sought them; but I was fully persuaded they would kill me. I stood at the top of a flight of stairs, and this woman at the bottom, coaxing me to come to her. She might as well have entreated the moon. I instantly tumbled to the bottom. She

took me in her arms, endeavoured to pacify me, dandled me on the knee, and I was surprised that I escaped with life.

1727. At Mountserrel I had an uncle, who was a grocer, and a bachelor; also a grandmother, who kept his house; and at Swithland, two miles distant, three crabbed aunts, all single, who resided together as grocers, milliners, mercers, and school-mistresses. My family being distressed, I was sent over, and I resided alternately with my uncle and my aunt fifteen months. Here I was put into breeches, at the age of four: here I was an interloper, and treated with much ill-nature. Nothing is more common than for people, particularly young women, to be fond of children. I can recollect numberless instances of insult, but not one civil thing they ever said. "You are an ugly lad: you are like your father. Your brother is a pretty lad: he is like his mother" (she was their sister). I was unable to return an answer. They might have considered that this, and other evils, were out of my power to remove.

It is curious to observe the ideas of infants. One of my aunts, taking me from Mountserrel to Swithland, entered a house at the skirts of the town, where I saw several men rather noisy, and could not conceive they were of the family. I observed also the shelves abounding with crockery-ware, and could not imagine the use. The woman of the house took us into a back room, where she and my aunt seemed very familiar.

We passed on without resting; and my aunt, during this little journey, felt down, perhaps twenty times, and generally at a stile, often lay a minute or two, and bade me look if any person was coming. I answered "No"; but the answer was needless, for I was scarcely able to look over a blade of grass. No damage ensued, except my being terrified.

Many years elapsed before I could unravel this mystery, which was no more than my aunt entering a public-house. The crocks were the drinking-cups; and in the private room she got so completely drunk, she could neither stand nor walk.

In the corner of my aunts' garden stood a hive of bees. I one day watched them with great attention, at their own door,

and thought their proceedings curious, when, like a child with a plaything, which he first admires and then destroys, I gave them a blow with my hat, and ran away. A party was instantly detached in pursuit of me, which, being swifter of wing than I of foot, settled in my neck. I roared as well as ran. My timorous aunts durst not touch them, but sent for a neighbour, while I continued in agonies. After committing great depredations, the enemy were reduced: I was put under cure, but never forgot who was the aggressor.

Standing at the hob by the fire at supper, with the spoon in my left hand, my uncle asked me, "Which was my right?" Without knowing, I instantly stretched out the right, "This." Though meant as a reproof, which I did not comprehend, yet for many years, when it was necessary to know which was the right or left hand, imagination placed me at the hob, which instantly informed me.

Another incident that occurred was the adventures of a frog. An humble member of the croaking society happening to hop out to take the evening air, approached the door where our three heroines stood, and I near them. They darted in, terribly frightened, shut the door, and handed a broom through the window, with orders for me to kill the frog. I was pleased that I could be useful; but while fumbling with the broom, which I was not much used to handle, the condemned animal escaped; I lost a little credit, and got more blame, as having left an enemy in ambush.

My eldest aunt, an ingenious, prudent, ill-tempered woman, was taken sick, and I saw her breathe her last, without having the least knowledge of that momentous event.

1728.—My mother, unknown to me, came to Mountsorrel to fetch me home. The maid took me out of bed naked, except my shift, and, having her left hand employed, could only spare the right, with which she dangled me downstairs by the arm, as a man does a new-purchased goose, her knee thumping against my back every step. I was exceedingly ashamed to appear before my mother, then a stranger, in that indecent state.

My uncle, the next day, carried her behind him on horse-back, and me before, upon a pillow, to meet the Derby wagon at Loughborough. My father, who had not seen me for fifteen months, received me with only two words, and those marked with indifference, "So, Bill!"

Being four years and a half old, and dressed in my best suit, a cocked hat, and walking-stick, my sister took me by the hand to Gilbert Bridge's for the evening's milk, which was, in future, to be my errand. One of his buxom daughters, in a gay mood, snatched off my hat, and laughed at me as one who wins. I gave her a blow with the knob-end of my stick; she returned the hat in a more serious tone, with "The young rogue has hurt me"; and from thence gave me the name of *Smiler*.

I now went to school to Mr. Thomas Meat, of harsh memory, who often took occasion to beat my head against the wall, holding it by the hair, but never could beat any learning into it; I hated all books but those of pictures.

New a brother John was born, but soon left us, by which he escaped that distress which awaited me.

1720.—My father worked from home, and when my mother was out, the care of the family, two brothers and myself, devolved upon me, though not the eldest. My mother ordered me, when breakfast was ready, "to pour out each his portion of milk-porridge, and take my father his, before I ate mine." I served a mess to each, rejoiced at the excellent measure, and fell to.

During the pleasure of eating, I recollected I had forgotten my father. Astonishment seized me: I proposed that each of us should contribute to make good the deficiency. My eldest brother refused: I therefore took a little from the youngest, and all my own, to cure the evil. My father, at noon, remarked, Bill had rather pinched him. Thus I began house-keeping early, but began with a blunder.

My father had borrowed two newspapers. I was sent to return them. I lost both. The price of each was only three-halfpence, but I was as much harassed as if I had committed a crime of magnitude.

Consultations were held about fixing me in some employment, for the benefit of the family. Winding quills for the weaver was mentioned, but died away. Stripping tobacco for the grocer, in which I was to earn fourpence a week, was proposed; but it was at last concluded that I was too young for any employment.

1730.—This summer my sister Ann was born, and as I was considered the most active of the children, the nursing was committed to me. I wished to see her in leading strings, like other children, but, being too poor to buy, I procured a pack-thread string, which I placed under her arms, but the dear little thing informed me by her cries that I hurt her.

Now we lost my dear brother George, a lovely child, three years and a half old. It had been my office to take him by the hand to play. My father expressed great sorrow.

My days of play were now drawing to an end. The silk-mill was proposed. One of the clerks remarked to the person who took me there that the offer was needless, I was too young. However, the offer was made, and, as hands were wanted in the infant state of this work, I was accepted. It was found, upon trial, that nature had not given me length sufficient to reach the engine; for, out of three hundred persons employed in the mill, I was by far the least and the youngest.

It is happy for man that invention supplies the place of want. The superintendents wisely thought if they could lengthen one end it would affect both. A pair of high pattens were therefore fabricated, and tied fast about my feet, to make them steady companions. They were clumsy companions, which I dragged about one year, and with pleasure delivered up.

I had now to rise at five every morning during seven years, submit to the cane whenever convenient to the master, be the constant companion of the most rude and vulgar of the human race, never taught by nature, nor ever wishing to be taught. A lad, let his mind be in what state it would, must be as impudent as they, or be hunted down. I could not consider

This place in any other light than that of a complete bear-garden.<sup>1</sup>

1731.—March the eleventh, was born, quite unknown to me, at Aston upon Trent, six miles east of Derby, a female child, who, twenty-four years after, was to become my wife, be my faithful and dear companion, and love me better than herself. I was to possess this inestimable treasure forty years, then to lose it, and mourn its loss every future day of my life.

There does not exist in man thankfulness proportionate to

[In his *History of Derby*, Hutton dwells upon his painful slavery in the Derby silk-mill.

“Some have earnestly wished to see this singular piece of mechanism, but I have sincerely wished I never had. I have lamented that, while almost every man in the world was born out of Derby, it should be my unhappy lot to be born in. To this curious, but wretched place, I was bound apprentice for seven years, which I always considered the most unhappy of my life. These I faithfully served, which was equalled by no other, in my time, except a worthy brother, then my companion in distress, and now my intelligent friend. It is therefore no wonder if I am perfectly acquainted with every movement in that superb work. My parents, through mere necessity, put me to labour before nature had made me able. Low as the engines were, I was too short to reach them. To remedy this defect, a pair of high pattens were fabricated and lashed to my feet, which I dragged after me till time lengthened my stature. The confinement and the labour were no burden, but the severity was intolerable, the marks of which I yet carry, and shall carry to the grave. The inadvertencies of an infant, committed without design, can never merit the extreme of harsh treatment. A love of power is predominant in every creature: a love to punish is often attendant upon that power. The man who delights in punishment is more likely to inflict it than the offender to deserve it. He who feels for another will not torture from choice. A merciful judge punishes with regret, a tyrant with pleasure. He who mourns over the chastisement he must inflict will endeavour to reduce it; he who rejoices will augment it: one displays a great, the other a little mind. Hoisted upon the back of Bryan Barker, a giant approaching seven feet, was like being hoisted to the top of a precipice, when the wicked instrument of affliction was wielded with pleasure; but, alas! it was only a pleasure to one side. It was again my unhappy lot, at the close of this servitude, to be bound apprentice to a stocking-maker for a second seven years, so that, like Jacob, I served two apprenticeships, but was not, like him, rewarded either with wealth or beauty.”

He joyfully acknowledged the fact that, since his time, humanity had introduced a kinder treatment.]



the long enjoyment of a valuable favour; but there does exist a regret at the loss equal to its magnitude.

I became a favourite of two of the clerks, and many of the children, owing, perhaps, to my being the least infant among infants.

We were the only family of Dissenters connected with the silk-mill. One of the clerks wished to make me a convert to the Established Church, and threw out the lure of a halfpenny every Sunday I should attend divine service there. This purchased me; and my father, who was a moderate man, winked at the purchase. This proves an assertion of Sir Robert Walpole, "That every man has his price". None could be much lower than mine.

One Sunday I was discovered in a remote pew, playing at push-pin. My patron, the next morning, had too much good nature to punish me, or withhold his favour, but he applied a more effectual remedy. He played at push-pin under my own eye, and with a tolerable share of grimace; which brought the laugh of the whole room upon me.

Entering the gates of the mill, at noon, a strong wind blew off my hat, which rolled before me into the Derwent. I could have gone swifter than the hat, but knew I should acquire a velocity that would have run me into the river, which being deep, I had lost my life. In distress, I travelled by its side, the whole length of the building, but it continued just out of my reach. I mourned its loss the whole afternoon, as well as dreaded the consequence.

My master informed the chief governor, who ordered him to take me to a hatter, and purchase another. I was asked whether I would have a plain band, or one with a silver tassel? What child refuses finery? I chose the latter, and became the envy of the mill.

Christmas holidays were attended with snow, followed by a sharp frost. A thaw came on, in the afternoon of the 27th, but in the night the ground was again caught by a frost, which glazed the streets. I did not awake, the next morning, till daylight seemed to appear. I rose in tears, for fear of

punishment, and went to my father's bed-side, to ask what was o'clock? "He believed six." I darted out in agonies, and, from the bottom of Full Street, to the top of Silk-mill Lane; not 200 yards, I fell nine times! Observing no lights in the mill, I knew it was an early hour, and that the reflection of the snow had deceived me. Returning, it struck two. As I now went with care, I fell but twice.

Remarkably fond of fruit, but unable to purchase it, my mother was obliged to conceal her stock, for fear of depredation. She had bought a quantity of apples, and hid them, as she thought, out of the reach of my ken; but few eyes are more watchful than those of a longing child. Opening her store for use, when a few days had elapsed, she was astonished to find they had all vanished except two small ones! Her good nature, however, excused and concealed the fault, which my father's remembrance of a similar fault of his own would not have induced him to pardon, had he been apprised of it.

1732.—Going to the execution of Hewett and Rosamond I could not get over the steps at the brook, and the crowd was more inclined to push me in than to help me. My father accidentally came, handed me over, and moralized upon the melancholy subject.

I assisted in the rejoicings at the silk-mill, owing to Government granting Sir Thomas Lombe £14,000 in consideration of their not renewing his patent.

In pouring some bobbins out of one box into another, the cogs of an engine caught the box in my hand. The works in all the five rooms began to thunder, crack and break to pieces; a universal cry of "Stop mills!" ensued. All the violent powers of nature operated within me. With the strength of a madman I wrenched the box from the wheel; but, alas, the mischief was done. I durst not show my face, nor retreat to dinner till every soul was gone. Pity in distress was not found within those walls.

It is uncommon for depression to continue upon an infant mind. In my way home I saw a man intoxicated, playing a variety of most foolish tricks, highly diverting to the com-

pany. Had my spirits been but moderately affected, I should have laughed most heartily; but they were too far sunk. Sorrow operated against rejoicing.

I saw the wonderful feats performed by Cadman, in flying from the top of All Saints' steeple to the bottom of St. Michael's.

During the Christmas holidays, my mother sent me for some tobacco. In the joyous airs of childhood, I tossed up the halfpenny till I lost it beyond redemption. Returning, my mother upbraided me, when I imprudently replied, with a careless air, "You should not have sent me." That word proved my bane; she informed my father, who gave me the most severe thrashing I ever received from him. He broke his walking-stick, the fragments of which, after the battle was over, I began to splice together with a string for my own use.

1733.—The year began to increase, and my calamities with it. My mother brought forth a son, Samuel; during her lying-in, being hurt at seeing the nurse unhandy, she would do the work herself, and rinsing clothes in cold water brought her to the grave five weeks after her delivery, at the age of forty-one. I returned from the mill at noon, on Friday, March the ninth, when Nanny Ease, my mother's friend, accosted me with, "Your mother is gone." I burst into tears. "Don't cry, you will go yourself soon." This remark did not add to my comfort. My father said, "You have lost an excellent mother, and I a wife."

A few days after her death, as I have related in my history of the family, he declined housekeeping, sold up, and spent the money, took lodgings for himself and three children, with a widow who had four of her own.

My mother gone, my father at the ale-house, and I among strangers, my life was forlorn. I was almost without a home, nearly without clothes, and experienced a scanty cupboard. At one time, I fasted from breakfast one day, till noon the next, and even then, dined upon only flour and water boiled into an hasty-pudding. I was also afflicted with the chin-cough and with biles.

In August, I saw, upon Sinfin-moor, a horse-race for the first time.

Though my father was neither young, being forty-two, nor handsome, having lost an eye, nor sober, for he spent all he could get in liquor, nor clean, for his trade was oily, nor without shackles, for he had five children, yet women of various descriptions courted his smiles, and were much inclined to pull caps for him.

On my birthday at night my father treated us with a quart of twopenny beer; and observed, that the life of man was divided into seven stages of ten years each, and that I had now completed the first.

1734.—This year kindled a violent election flame, which burnt vehemently in the county of Derby. Drinking, fighting, cursing, injuring, animosity, and murder, were the result; nor is it a wonder that ten thousand evils should arise, when the process of any plan of moment is radically bad. The contending parties were, Sir Nathaniel Curzon, father to the present Lord Scarsdale, John Harper, son to the then baronet, and grandfather to the present, on one side; and Lord Charles Cavendish on the other. Cavendish and Curzon were the successful candidates.

In October, my sister, whom we had not seen for five years, paid us a visit from Switzerland. She was drawing towards fifteen, and appeared a tall, handsome, straight girl. I was struck with the singularity of her departure. She was to attend the Leicester wagon at five in the morning, my father called her to his bed-side, gave her a kiss, and two shillings towards her journey, wished her well, never stirred a foot to conduct her, but suffered her to go alone, though the morning was dark.

The rage for flying had continued two years in full force; I caught that rage, but not being able to procure a rope, I and my companions laid hold of a scaffold pole in the absence of the workmen, who were erecting a house in Amen Corner, south of All-Saints. We placed one end in the church-yard, and the other in the chamber window, and flew over the wall.

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We soon made the pole as bright as a looking-glass, but reduced our raiment to rags. To this day I never pass the place without a glance at the window.

A few young men, adepts in the art of flying, procured the consent of Sir Nathaniel Curzon, to perform at Keddleston for the amusement of the family. They fastened one end of the rope to the top of the hall, the other in the park; but the unlucky performer instead of flying over the river, fell in, blasted his character, and instead of regaling upon beef and ale, the whole bevy sneaked off privately. This gave a check to the art; but when the man, boy, wheel-barrow, and ass flew down, the tragedy put an end to the art of flying.<sup>1</sup>

1735.—This summer was so dry that the water would

<sup>1</sup> "The Flying Rage", as Hutton very properly called it, ran to a great height in and about Derby at this time. He has himself left the most humorous and the best description of it, in his history of his native town.

"1732.—There are characters who had rather amuse the world, at the hazard of their lives, for a slender and precarious pittance, than follow an honest calling for an easy subsistence. A small figure of a man, seemingly composed of spirit and gristle, appeared in October, to entertain the town by sliding down a rope. One end of this was to be fixed at the top of All-Saints steeple, and the other at the bottom of St. Michael's, an horizontal distance of eighty yards, which formed an inclined plane extremely steep. A breastplate of wood, with a groove to fit the rope, and his own equilibrium, were to be his security, while sliding down upon his arms and legs extended. He could not be more than six or seven seconds in this airy journey, in which he fired a pistol and blew a trumpet. The velocity with which he flew, raised a fire by friction, and a bold stream of smoke followed him. He performed this wonderful exploit three successive days, in each of which he descended twice, and marched up once: the latter took him more than an hour, in which he exhibited many surprising achievements, as sitting unconcerned with his arms folded, lying across the rope upon his back, then his belly, his hams, blowing the trumpet, swinging round, hanging by the chin, the hand, the heels, the toe, &c. The rope being too long for art to tighten, he might be said to have danced upon the slack. Though he succeeded at Derby, yet, in exhibiting soon after at Shrewsbury, he fell, and lost his life. Feats of activity are sure to catch the younger part of the world. No amusement was seen but the rope; walls, posts, trees, and houses, were mounted for the pleasure of flying down; if a straggling scaffold pole could be found, it was reared for the convenience of flying; nay, even cats, dogs, and things inanimate, were applied, in a double sense, to the rope.

scarcely turn the wheels; which, giving us children leisure, was very agreeable.

I visited Bredsall-moor, as all the country did, a warren, and on fire for many weeks. I frequently went to Mackworth, to see my little brother, who, being prudently attended, became a charming boy.

The colony of Georgia, in its infant state, invited many emigrants under General Oglethorpe. They produced Orgazine silk, and sent it to England. It was good, but of a bad colour. The General, Sir Thomas Lombe, and the Trustees, waited upon Queen Caroline with a specimen, who ordered a gown and petticoat. It was sent to Derby, and I was one employed in the manufactory. Thus an insignificant animal, nearly naked himself, assisted in clothing a queen.

"This flying rage was not cured till August, 1734, when another diminutive figure appeared, much older than the first: his coat was in dishabille, no waistcoat, his shirt and his shoes the worse for wear, his hat worth threepence exclusive of the band, which was pack-thread, bleached white by the weather, and a black string supplied the place of buttons to his waistband. He wisely considered, if his performances did not exceed the other's, he might as well stay at home, if he had one. His rope, therefore, from the same steeple extended to the bottom of St. Mary-gate, more than twice the former length. He was to draw a wheel-barrow after him, in which was a boy of thirteen. After this surprising performance, an ass was to fly down, armed as before, with a breast-plate, and at each foot a lump of lead about half a hundred. The man, the barrow, and its contents, arrived safe at the end of their journey; when the vast multitude turned their eyes towards the ass, which had been braying several days at the top of the steeple for food; but, like many a lofty courtier for a place, brayed in vain: the slackness of the rope, and the great weight of the animal and its apparatus, made it seem, at setting off, as if he was falling perpendicular. The appearance was tremendous! About twenty yards before he reached the gates of the county hall, the rope broke: from the velocity acquired by the descent, he bore down all before him. A whole multitude was overwhelmed, nothing was heard but dreadful cries, nor seen, but confusion. Legs and arms went to destruction. In this dire calamity, the ass, which maimed others, was unhurt himself, having a pavement of soft bodies to roll over. No lives were lost. As the rope broke near the top, it brought down both chimneys and people at the other end of the street. This dreadful catastrophe put a period to the art of flying. It prevented the operator making the intended collection; and he sneaked out of Derby as poor as he sneaked in."

1736.—I was now turned twelve. Life began to open. My situation at the mill was very unfavourable. Richard Porter, my master, had made a wound on my back with his cane. It grew worse. In a succeeding punishment, the point of his cane struck the wound, which brought it into such a state that a mortification was apprehended. My father was advised to bathe me in Keddleston water. A cure was effected, and I yet carry the scar.

An agreeable old woman of the name of Gell, from Wirksworth, came to lodge where we did. She had been a school-mistress. She made many entertaining remarks, and promised us lads we should be the better for her coming; nor did she disappoint us.

My uncle and Aunt Fletcher paid a visit, from Herefordshire, to my uncle at Nottingham; and, on Friday in Whitsun week, my father, brother, and I, met them there, and returned on Monday.

Nothing could equal the pleasure of this journey. I brought home such a description as could not be expected from my age. Every auditor looked up to me, and I took the lead in conversation. This was the only time I saw my aunt. I thought her handsome, proud, and sensible. "Billy," said she, "it is not good manners to sit in the house with your hat on." I felt the reproof, and never forgot it.

1737.—I was now in the last year of my servitude at the silk-mill, and was advancing towards fourteen. It therefore became requisite to point out some mode of future life. My father had often declared, that none of his sons should ever be brought up to the wool-combing business, his own; or to the stocking-frame, his brother's. As I knew his dilatory temper, I was afraid, when the time came, I should have a trade to seek. I chose that of a gardener. This he encouraged. Time still advanced, but nothing was done. A stocking-maker in Derby solicited to have me. My father replied, "I have refused my own brother."

Nicholas Richardson, an old honest Scotsman, intimate with both father and uncle, took me aside in August, and used all

his rhetoric to induce me to serve my uncle. He, however, was serving him. At the same time my father assured me, "Gardening was a slavish trade;" that is, he had no inclination to stir. I was induced to consent to the proposal of Nicholas. I cut, with a penknife, upon one of the top rails of the seventh mill above, *W. H. 1787*, which I saw in 1790, fifty-three years after.

Christmas arrived, when I must quit that place, for which I had a sovereign contempt: which many hundreds had quitted during my stay, but not one with regret: a place most curious and pleasing to the eye, but which gave me a seven years' heartache. No friendships are formed there, but such as the parties are willing to break. The attendants are children of nature, corrupted by art. What they learn in the mill, they ought to unlearn out.

1738.—I now quitted my occupation, my father, brothers, friends, connections, and place of nativity, for everything new at Nottingham, where a scene opens for thirteen years. I found a generous friendly uncle, a mean sneaking aunt: he seriously religious; she as serious a hypocrite: two apprentices; one a rogue, the other greater.

I had just finished one seven years' servitude, and was entering upon another. In the former, I was welcome to the food I ate, provided I could get it; but now that it was more plentiful, I was to be grudged every meal I tasted. My aunt kept a constant eye upon the food and the feeder. This curb galled my mouth to that degree, that to this day I do not eat at another's table without fear. The impressions received in early life are astonishing.

This loving couple agreed admirably well. The reason was plain: he submitted.

I was too young to have any concern in the terms of servitude, and my father too poor to lend assistance. A burden was therefore laid upon me, which I afterwards found intolerable; that my over-work, without knowing whether I should get any, must find me clothes.

My task was to earn five shillings and tenpence a week.



The first week I could reach this sum I was to be gratified with sixpence; but ever after, should I fall short, or go beyond it, the loss or profit was to be my own. I found it was the general practice of apprentices to be under the mark.

Things went on smiling, as all new concerns will, till Whitsuntide; when my uncle took me to Derby to see my friends. A week prior to this I had arrived at my task, got the sixpence, and puffed away like a young winner. My brother, who was then sixteen, had not found a trade, nor had there been any attempts to find one for him. He must either be a despicable stockinger, or nothing. He followed us; and now my uncle had got two of the three sons.

He who stretches his utmost powers to accomplish a point in one week, will probably fall short the next. This was my case. Instead of earning apparel with over-work, I ran in arrears. At Christmas we took another trip to Derby, but my uncle had not the good fortune to pick up another lad.

1739.—I now got into what was called the line frame; and my weekly task was six shillings and ninepence. Clothes came as sluggishly as food. I was arriving at that age when the two sexes begin to look at each other, consequently wish to please; and a powerful mode to win is that of dress. This is a passport to the heart, a key to unlock the passions, and guide them in our favour. My resources were cut off; my sun was eclipsed. Youth is the time to dress; the time in which it is not only excusable, but laudable. I envied every new coat; I had the wish to earn one, but not the power.

Perhaps there is not a human being but sooner or later feels, in some degree, the passion of love. I was struck with a girl; watched her wherever I could, and peeped through the chink of the window-shutter at night. She lay near my heart eleven years; but I never spoke to her in my whole life, nor was she ever apprised of my passion.

My uncle and his friends being religious men, and the doctrine of the Trinity, which had employed the public tongue and the pen for seven years, not being determined, I was witness to many disputes upon this dark point. Scripture, the

source of argument, seemed to support both sides; for each drew his artillery from thence; consequently the dispute might be carried on *ad infinitum*; and both find themselves where they set out, only with this difference, that controversy disjoins society, and produces a shyness among friends. I could easily perceive the contenders were willing to send each other to the devil. Besides, if a man wins, he gains nothing by winning, as dispute forms no part of Christian practice. It may, in some measure, disguise truth; for, if I endeavour to persuade a man into my opinion, either in religion or politics, it tends to confirm him in his own. He instantly makes a side against me; nay, it even confirms him in what he only doubted before. The utmost length allowable is to state reasons.

The lesser rogue of an apprentice ran away, and was heard of no more; and the greater was sold,<sup>1</sup> and ruined his master.

1740—Was ushered in with the *hard frost*. Two or three frosts have since occurred, which the world has thought as cold, or nearly; but I remember them well, and can assure the reader there has been nothing like it for severity. That frost was not followed by a thaw, but continued till the spring gradually wore it away. We are not, however, to suppose the whole of the time intensely cold; the greater part resembled other frosts.

On New-year's Day fell a moderate snow, perhaps three inches in depth; and no more fell during the winter. Some of this I saw in March. Many persons remarked that their breath was frozen on the sheet. Mine was not; for I lay wholly covered all night, which I never could do before or since. At the beginning of the frost, which was the severest part, I wore a thin waistcoat, without a lining, and no coat.

The inclement season was not the sole wonder of the day. My uncle and his wife had a violent quarrel; the only one in my time. I understood that she had struck him, which provoked him beyond bounds. He made an attempt to punish her. I stepped in by way of prevention, and, with gentle

<sup>1</sup> His indentures, *i.e.*, being cancelled or transferred.

soothings, effected a peace. He afterwards seemed pleased, and she in plain terms acknowledged the kindness. He was mild as a lamb, but, when once irritated, observed no bounds.

My uncle thought it necessary to keep up the succession of apprentices; and, as two were gone, a boy from Draycott, ten miles distant, was recommended. My uncle brought him on Saturday night; but, by Monday morning, the boy's mother could not rest, because he was either kidnapped or murdered; and sent the father, with positive orders, to bring him back, alive or dead, if above-ground. The father entered the house, with sounds like the roarings of a bull; and, in the Derbyshire dialect, cried, "Where's th' lad? I mun tak him bak! I've lond ith' feeld woth fifty paund. I've thutt' paund by me, an' I dunna owe th' wo'ld a shilling!"

My uncle looked disappointed; thought the fellow a fool; and gave up the lad with a promise of his return, after having shown the booby to his mother. The promise was never fulfilled.

Another apprentice, Roper, was brought from Derby. He proved surly and overbearing; ran away himself, and taught me. He returned again; then went into the army, and so good-bye.

The frost, followed by an upward summer, brought on a rise of provisions. It was considered by the mistress as almost a sin to eat. I should have been an acceptable servant, could I have subsisted without eating.

1741.—What the mind is bent upon obtaining, the hand seldom fails in accomplishing. I detested the frame, as totally unsuitable to my temper; therefore, I produced no more profit than necessity demanded. I made shift, however, with a little over-work, and a little credit, to raise a genteel suit of clothes, fully adequate to the sphere in which I moved. The girls eyed me with some attention; nay, I eyed myself as much as any of them.

My sister came, whom I had not seen for seven years; handsome, keen, and sensible. Her manner commanded respect.

Thus matters went on prosperously. I was rising into notice: a foundation was laid for a brighter day, when an unhappy quarrel between my uncle and me, upon a mere trifle, caused me to run away, blasted my views, sunk me in the dust, and placed me in a degraded point of view, from which I did not recover for five years. This I have faithfully related in *The History of a Week* (a quarto manuscript in my son's library), written from memory thirty-eight years after the event, which I shall literally transcribe.

#### THE HISTORY OF A WEEK.

The week of the races is an idle one among stockingers at Nottingham. It was so with me. Five days had passed, and I had done little more than the work of four.

My uncle, who always judged from the present moment, supposed I should never return to industry. He was angry at my neglect, and observed, on Saturday morning, that if I did not perform my task that day, he would thrash me at night. Idleness, which had hovered over me five days, did not choose to leave me the sixth. Night came. I wanted one hour's work: I hoped my former conduct would atone for the present. But he had passed his word, and a man does not wish to break it. "You have not done the task I ordered!" I was silent. "Was it in your power to have done it?" Still silent. He repeated again, "Could you have done it?" As I ever detested lying, I could not think of covering myself, even from a rising storm, by so mean a subterfuge; for we both knew I had done near twice as much. I therefore answered in a low, meek voice, "*I could.*" This fatal word, innocent in itself, and founded upon truth, proved my destruction. "Then," says he, "I'll make you." He immediately brought a birch broom handle, of white-hazel, and holding it by the small end, repeated his blows till I thought he would have broken me to pieces. The windows were open, the evening calm, the sky serene, and everything mild but my uncle and me. The sound of the roar, and the stick, penetrated the air to a great distance.

The neighbourhood turned out to inquire the cause; when, after some investigation, it was said to be, "Only Hutton thrashing one of his lads!" Whether the crime and the punishment were adequate, I leave to the reader to determine. He afterwards told my father that he should not have quarrelled with me but for that word. But let me ask, what word could I have substituted in its room, unless I had meant to equivocate?

I was drawing towards eighteen, held some rank among my acquaintance, made a small figure in dress, and was taken notice of by the fair sex: therefore, though I was greatly hurt in body, I was much more hurt in mind. Pride takes a very early root in the heart, and never leaves us but with life. How should I face those whom I had often laughed at, and whipped with the rod of satire?

The next day, July 12, 1741, I went to meeting in the morning as usual. My uncle seemed sorry for what had passed, and inclined to make matters up. At noon he sent me for some fruit, and asked me to partake. I thanked him with a sullen *no*. My wounds were too deep to be healed with cherries.

Standing by the palisades of the house, in a gloomy posture, a female acquaintance passed by, and turning, with a pointed sneer, said, "You were *lucked* last night!" The remark stung me to the quick. I had rather he had broken my head.

My fellow apprentice, Roper, was bigger, and older than I, though he came two years after me. This opaque body of ill-nature centred between my uncle and myself, and eclipsed that affection which gave pleasure to both. He stayed with us three years. The two years of my servitude, before he came, were spent in great friendship with my uncle; and after he left, the same friendship returned, and continued for life.

This lad had often solicited me to run away with him; but I considered that my leaving my uncle would be a loss to him, for which I should be very sorry; and that, if I told Roper my design, he would insist upon going with me, which would double that loss. I could not bear the thought: therefore

resolved to go alone, for which Roper, afterwards, blamed me.

I put on my hat, as if going to meeting, but privately slipped up stairs till the family were gone. The whole house was now open to my inspection. Upon examining a glass in the beaufet, I found ten shillings. I took two, and left eight.

After packing up my small stock of movables, I was at a loss how to get out of the house. There was but one door, which was locked, and my uncle had the key. I contrived, therefore, to get my chattels upon a wall, eight feet high, in a small back-yard, climb up myself, drop them on the other side, and jump down after them.

While this was transacting, an acquaintance passed by. I imparted my design to him, because it was impossible to hide it, and enjoined him secrecy. He seemed to rejoice at my scheme, or rather at my fall; for if I commit an error and he does not, he is the best of the two.

I gave to yourself a lad of seventeen, not elegantly dressed, nearly five feet high, rather Dutch built, with a long narrow bag of brown leather, that would hold about a bushel, in which was neatly packed up a new suit of clothes; also, a white linen bag, which would hold about half as much, containing a six-penny loaf of coarse blencorn bread,<sup>1</sup> a bit of butter, wrapped in the leaves of an old copy-book; a new Bible, value three shillings; one shirt; a pair of stockings; a sun-dial; my best wig, carefully folded and laid at top, that, by lying in the hollow of the bag, it might not be crushed. The ends of the two bags being tied together, I slung them over my left shoulder, rather in the style of a cock-fighter. My best hat not being properly calculated for a bag, I hung to the button of my coat. I had only two shillings in my pocket, a spacious world before me, and no plan of operations.

I cast back many a melancholy look, while every step set me at a greater distance; and took what I thought an everlasting farewell of Nottingham.

I carried neither a light heart, nor a light load; nay, there

<sup>1</sup> Blencorn (blended-corn), a mixture of wheat and rye.

was nothing light about me but the sun in the heavens, and the money in my pocket. I considered myself an outcast, an exuberance in the creation, a being now fitted to no purpose. At ten, I arrived at Derby. The inhabitants were gone to bed, as if retreating from my society.

I took a view of my father's house, where, I supposed, all were at rest: but before I was aware, I perceived the door open, and heard his foot not three yards from me. I retreated with precipitation. How ill calculated are we to judge of events! I was running from the last hand that could have saved me!

Adjoining the town is a field called Abbeybarns, the scene of my childish amusements. Here I took up my abode upon the cold grass, in a damp place, after a day's fatigue, with the sky over my head, and the bags by my side. I need not say I was a boy, this rash action proves it. The place was full of cattle. The full breath of the cows, half asleep, the jingling of the chains at the horses' feet, and a mind agitated, were ill-calculated for rest.

I rose at four, July 13, starved, sore, and stiff; deposited my bags under the fourth tree, covering them with leaves, while I waited upon Warburgh's bridge for my brother Samuel, who I knew would go to the silk-mills before five. I told him that I had differed with my uncle, had left him, and intended to go to Ireland; that he must remember me to my father, whom I should probably see no more. I had all the discourse to myself, for my brother did not utter one word.

I arrived at Burton the same morning, having travelled twenty-eight miles, and spent nothing. I was an economist from my cradle, and the character never forsook me. To this I in some measure owe my present situation.

I ever had an inclination to examine fresh places. Leaving my bags at a public-house, I took a view of the town, and, breaking into my first shilling, I spent one penny as a recompense for the care of them.

Arriving the same evening within the precincts of Lichfield, I approached a barn, where I intended to lodge; but, finding

the door shut, I opened my parcels in the fields, dressed, hid my bags near a hedge, and took a view of the city for about two hours, though very sore-rested.

Returning to the spot about nine, I undressed, bagged up my things in decent order, and prepared for rest; but, alas! I had a bed to seek. About a stone's cast from the place stood another barn, which, perhaps, might furnish me with a lodging. I thought it needless to take the bags while I examined the place, as my stay would be very short.

The second barn yielding no relief, I returned in about ten minutes. But what was my surprise when I perceived the bags were gone! Terror seized me. I roared after the rascal, but might as well have been silent, for thieves seldom come at a call. Running, raving, and lamenting about the fields and roads employed some time. I was too much immersed in distress to find relief in tears. They refused to flow. I described the bags, and told the affair to all I met. I found pity, or seeming pity, from all, but redress from none. I saw my hearers dwindling with the twilight; and, by eleven o'clock, found myself in the open street, left to tell my mournful tale to the silent night.

It is not easy to place a human being in a more distressed situation. My finances were nothing; a stranger to the world, and the world to me; no employ, nor likely to procure any; no food to eat, or place to rest: all the little property I had upon earth taken from me: nay, even *hope*, that last and constant friend of the unfortunate, forsook me. I was in a more wretched condition than he who has nothing to lose. An eye may roll over these lines when the hand that writes them shall be still. May that eye move without a tear! I sought repose in the street, upon a butcher's block.

July 14.—I inquired, early in the morning, after my property, but to as little purpose as the night before. Among others, I accosted a gentleman in a wrought night-cap, plaid gown, and morocco slippers. I told him my distress, and begged he would point out some mode of employ, that might enable me to exist. He was touched with compassion. I



found it was easy to penetrate his heart, but not his pocket. "It is market-day at Walsall," said he; "yonder people are going there; your attendance upon them may be successful." I instantly put his advice in practice, and found myself in the company of a man and his servant with a wagon-load of carrots; and also of an old fellow and his grandson with a horse-load of cherries. We continued together to the end of the journey; but I cannot say that either pity or success was of our party.

As my feet were not used to travel, they became extremely blistered; I therefore rubbed them with a little beef fat begged of a Walsall butcher, and found instant-relief.

Upon application to a man who sold stockings in the market I could learn that there were no frames in Walsall, but many in Birmingham; that he would recommend me to an acquaintance; and, if I should not succeed, there was Worcester, a little to the right, had some frames; and Coventry, a little to the left, would bring me into the stocking country.

Addison says, "There is not a *Woman* in England; that everyone of the British fair has a right to the appellation of *Lady*." I wondered, in my way from Walsall to Birmingham, to see so many blacksmiths' shops, in many of them one, and sometimes two *Ladies* at work, and with smutty faces, thundering at the anvil. Struck with the novelty, I asked if the ladies in this country shod horses? but was answered, "They are nailers."

Upon Handsworth heath I had a view of Birmingham. St. Philip's Church appeared first, uncrowded with houses (for there were none to the north, New Hall excepted), untarnished with smoke, and illuminated with a western sun. It appeared in all the pride of modern architecture. I was charmed with its beauty, and thought it then, as I do now, the credit of the place.

I had never seen more than five towns—Nottingham, Derby, Burton, Lichfield, and Walsall. The last three I had not known more than two days. The outskirts of these, and I supposed of others, were composed of wretched dwellings,

visibly stamped with dirt and poverty. But the buildings in the exterior of Birmingham rose in a style of elegance. Thatch, so plentiful in other places, was not to be met with in this. It did not occur to my thoughts, that nine years after I should become a resident here, and thirty-nine years after should write its history!

I was surprised at the place, but more at the people. They possessed a vivacity I had never beheld. I had been among dreamers, but now I saw men awake. Their very step along the street showed alacrity. Every man seemed to know what he was about. The town was large and full of inhabitants, and these inhabitants full of industry. The faces of other men seemed tinctured with an idle gloom, but here with a pleasing alertness. Their appearance was strongly marked with the modes of civil life.

How far commerce influences the habits of men is worthy the pen of the philosopher. The weather was extremely fine, which gave a lustre to the whole; the people seemed happy, and I the only animal out of use.

There appeared to be three stocking-makers in Birmingham. Evans, the old Quaker, of whom I was in being, was the principal. I asked him with great humility for employ. "You are an apprentice." "Sir, I am not, but come with the recommendation of your friend, Mr. Such-a-one of Walsall." "Go about your business, I tell you; you are a runaway 'prentice." I retreated, sincerely wishing I had business to go about.

I waited upon Holmes, in Dale-end; at that moment a customer entering, he gave me a penny to get rid of me.

The third was Francis Grace, at the Gateway, entering New Street. This man was a native of Derby, and knew my family. Fourteen years after he bestowed upon me a valuable wife, his niece, and sixteen years after he died, leaving me in possession of his premises and fortune, paying some legacies.

I made the same request to Mr. Grace that I had done to the others, and with the same effect. He asked after his brother at Derby. I answered readily, as if I knew. One lie often produces a second. He examined me closely, and though

a man of no shining talents quickly set me fast. I was obliged to tell three or four lies to patch up a lame tale, which I plainly saw would hardly pass.

I appeared a trembling stranger in that house, over which sixteen years after I should preside. I stood like a dejected culprit by that counter, upon which, thirty-eight years after, I should record the story. I thought though his name was Grace his heart was rugged, and I left the shop with this severe reflection that I had told several lies, and without the least advantage. I am sorry to digress, but must beg leave to break the thread of my narrative while I make two short remarks.

I acquired a high character for honesty by stealing two shillings! Not altogether because I took two out of ten, but because I left the other eight. A thief is seldom known to leave part of his booty. If I had had money I should not have taken any; and if I had found none I should not have run away. The reader will think that two shillings was a very moderate sum to carry me to Ireland.

The other is, whether lying is not laudable? If I could have consented to tell one lie to my uncle, I should not only have saved my back, my character, and my property, but also prevented about ten lies which I was obliged to tell in the course of the following week. But that Supreme Being who directs immensity, whether he judges with an angry eye according to some Christians, or with a benign one, according to others, will ever distinguish between an act of necessity and an act of choice.

It was now about seven o'clock in the evening, Tuesday, July 14, 1741. I sat to rest upon the north side of the Old Cross, near Philip Street; the poorest of all the poor belonging to that great parish, of which, twenty-seven years after, I should be overseer. I sat under that roof, a silent, oppressed object, where thirty-one years after I should sit to determine differences between man and man. Why did not some kind agent comfort me with the distant prospect?

About ten yards from me, near the corner of Philip Street, I perceived two men in aprons eye me with some attention.

They approached near. "You seem," says one, "by your melancholy situation and dusty shoes a forlorn traveller, without money and without friends." I assured him it was exactly my case. "If you choose to accept of a pint of ale it is at your service. I know what it is, myself to be a distressed traveller." "I shall receive any favour with thankfulness."

They took me to the Bell in Philip Street, and gave me what bread, cheese, and beer I chose. They also procured a lodging for me in the neighbourhood, where I slept for three halfpence.

I did not meet with this treatment twenty-nine years after at Market Bosworth, though I appeared rather like a gentleman. The inhabitants set their dogs at me merely because I was a stranger. Surrounded with impassable roads, no intercourse with man to humanize the mind, no commerce to smooth their rugged manners, they continue the boors of nature.

Wednesday, July 15. I could not prevail with myself to leave Birmingham, the seat of civility, but was determined to endeavour to forget my misfortunes and myself for one day, and take a nearer view of this happy abode of the smiling arts.

Thursday, 16. I arrived early in the day at Coventry, but could get no prospect of employment. The streets seemed narrow, ill-paved; the Cross a beautiful little piece of architecture, but composed of wretched materials. The city was populous; the houses had a gloomy air of antiquity, the upper story projecting over the lower, designed no doubt by the architect to answer two valuable purposes, those of shooting off the wet, and shaking hands out of the garret windows. But he forgot three evils arising from this improvement of art, the stagnation of air, the dark rooms, and the dirty streets.

I slept at the Star Inn, not as a chamber guest, but a hay-chamber one.

Friday, 17. I reached Nuneaton, and found I had again entered the dominions of sleep. That active spirit which marks the commercial race did not exist here. The inhabitants

seemed to creep along, as if afraid the street should be seen empty. However, they had sense enough to ring the word 'prentice in my ears, which I not only denied, but used every figure in rhetoric I was master of to establish my argument, yet was not able to persuade them out of their penetration. They still called me a boy. I thought it hard to perish because I could not convince people I was a man. I left the place without a smile and without a dinner—perhaps it is not very apt to produce either. I arrived at Hinckley about four in the afternoon. The first question usually put was, "Where do you come from?" My constant answer was, "Derby." "There is a countryman of yours," said the person, "in such a street, his name is Millward." I applied, and found I had been a neighbour to his family. He also knew something of mine. He set up the same objection that others had done, and I made the same unsuccessful reply.

He set me to work till night, about two hours, in which time I earned twopence. He then asked me into the house, entered into conversation with me, told me he was certain I was a runaway apprentice, and begged I would inform him ingenuously. I replied with tears that I was, and that an unhappy difference with my uncle was the cause of my leaving his service.

He said if I would set out on my return in the morning I should be welcome to a bed that night. I told him that I had no objection to the service of my uncle, but that I could not submit to any punishment, and if I were not received upon equitable terms I would immediately return to my own liberty.

He asked if I had any money? I answered, "Enough to carry me home." He was amazed, and threw out hints of crimination. I assured him he might rest satisfied on that head, for I had brought two shillings from Nottingham. He exclaimed with emotion, "Two shillings!" This confirmed his suspicions.

Wrapped in my own innocence I did not think my honesty worth vindicating, therefore did not throw away one argument.

upon it. Truth is persuasive, and will often make its way to the heart in its native simplicity better than a varnished lie.

Extreme frugality, especially in the prospect of distress, composes a part of my character.

Saturday, the 18th, I thanked my friend Millward for his kindness, received nothing for my work, nor he for his civility, and we parted the friends of an hour. At noon I saw Ashby-del-a-Zouch. It was market-day. I had eightpence remaining of my two shillings. My reader will ask, with Millward, "How I lived?" As he could not. Moralists say, "Keep desire low, and nature is satisfied with little." A turnip field has supplied the place of a cook's shop; a spring that of a public-house; and while at Birmingham, I knew by repeated experience that cherries were a halfpenny a pound.

I arrived at Derby at nine in the evening. My father gladly received me, and dropped a tear for my misfortunes. We agreed that he should send for my uncle early in the morning, who would probably be with us by four in the evening.

Sunday, 19. My father told me that I could not have appeared before him in a more disadvantageous light if I had said I was out of a jail—that he should think of this disagreeable circumstance every future day of his life, and that I must allow him to reprove me before my uncle.

As the time approached he seemed greatly cast down, and invited two of my uncle's old friends to step in and soften matters between us. But I considered that my uncle was naturally of a good temper, passion excepted; that I had left him suing for peace; that I had returned a volunteer, which carried the idea of repentance; that he must be conscious he had injured me; that he considered my service as a treasure, which he had been deprived of, and which, being found, he would rejoice at, just in proportion as he had grieved at the loss.

The two friends forgot to come. About nine my uncle entered, and shook hands with my father, for the two brothers were fond of each other. While their hands were united my

uncle turned to me with a look of benignity, superficially covered with anger, and said, "Are not you to blame?" I was silent.

The remainder of the evening was spent agreeably, and in the course of it my uncle said that if my father would make up one-half of my loss he would make up the other. My father received the proposal joyfully, and they ratified the agreement by a second shake of the hand. But I am sorry to observe it was thought of no more by either. I considered it peculiarly hard that the promise to punish me was remembered, but the promise to reward me forgotten.

This unhappy fumble damped my rising spirit. I could not forbear viewing myself in the light of a fugitive. It sunk me in the eye of my acquaintance, and I did not recover my former balance for two years. It also ruined me in point of dress, for I was not able to reassume my former appearance for five years. It ran me in debt, out of which I have never been to this day. Nov. 21, 1779.

#### THE END OF THE WEEK.

An old gentleman of the name of Webb, who had passed a life in London, brought £3000 into business, lived in genteel life, and had filled many offices, but was reduced, came to reside with us. He was one of the most sensible and best men, completely formed for an instructor of youth. It was my fortune to attend him, sleep with him, and love him. I treated him as a father, a monitor, and endeavoured to profit by him. He had many acquaintance, all men of sense, to whose conversation I listened by the hour.

I began this year with an old remark — let me close it with another — "One evil seldom comes alone." In addition to the distress arising from running away, I was long and sorely afflicted with the ague, which still impeded a rising spirit.

1742.— There was a contested election, March 6, at Derby, between Lord Duncannon, who had married the daughter of the Duke of Devonshire, and Germon Pole of Radburn. My uncle, being a burgess, was gone to vote. My brother, Roper,

and I, his three apprentices, being Derby lads, set out, or ran away if you please, to see the election. My uncle was very angry; he could not stir a foot but we must follow! My father undertook our excuse, succeeded, and the next day my uncle gave us sixpence to carry us back.

Monday, July 18, my worthy friend Mr Webb complained he had had an uncomfortable night. He grew worse till Friday morning, the 22nd, when he died. I saw him expire, assisted in bearing him to the grave, and need not observe, I mourned his loss. His friends declined their visits, which added to that loss.

I had many agreeable acquaintances, with whom I spent my evenings in athletic exercises, which in some measure counterbalanced the dull life of the frame. I was deemed the second in the class.

1743.—I began to make a small figure in dress, but much inferior to that two years ago. However, a young woman chose to fall in love with me, daily sought me out, drew me for her Valentine, talked of matrimony, lamented that I had two years to serve, mentioned several such a-ones who solicited her hand, and with what eagerness she had said *no*. I never answered any of these remarks. At length she asked me to marry her in plain terms. Thus she took a liberty totally forbidden to her sex, however unreasonably. I asked her "What prospect there could be of future life?" She replied in the low phrase of her sex, "I will please my eye if I plague my heart."

My uncle fixed upon the son of Joseph Knowles of Mackworth for an apprentice; hired a horse, fixed me upon him, and his wife behind, to perform this journey of nineteen miles, and employ the arts of solicitation. Whether this was a prudent step is doubtful. I had never ridden a mile, therefore could guide a horse about as well as a ship; neither did he know much more of the matter. Our family are not naturally equestrians. He advised me to keep a tight rein; I obeyed, and the horse took it for granted he must stand still. I held my legs close for fear of falling; he danced—I was in agonies,



and held by the mane. The beholders cried, "Take your spurs out of his sides!" I did not know they were in.

We jogged on with fear and trembling. I held the bridle with the right, and the pommel with the left hand, which soon wore a hole in the hand. My hat blew off: I slipped down before to recover it, but could not mount again. I walked with the bridle in hand, and my aunt upon the pillion, to find a place to rise. The horse went too slow: to quicken his pace I gave him a jerk: he started from under his burden, and left her in the dirt.

We were both frightened but not hurt, and came home safe, wind and limb. My uncle, when he paid for the hire, blamed the horse; but the owner, with a smile, said, "Was there no defect in the rider?"

At Whitsuntide I went to see my father, but upon a safer bottom—my feet,—and was favourably received by my acquaintance. One of them played upon the bell-harp. I was charmed with the sound, and agreed for the price, when I could raise the sum—half-a-crown.

I found that *love*, like a common flower in the garden, would spring into existence, rise to maturity, and die away. My father yet resided with the widow; they had courted each other ten years, and their love, having had its day, was withered, and had died of old age. He had sought another woman, and she a man. His marriage was brought forth in a few weeks, but hers proved still-born. My brother Samuel, ten years old, went with us; so now my uncle had all the three sons.

At Michaelmas I went to Derby, to pay for, and bring back, my bell-harp, whose sounds I thought seraphic. This opened a scene of pleasure which continued many years. Music was my daily study and delight; but perhaps I laboured under greater difficulties than anyone had done before me. I could not afford an instructor. I had no books, nor could I borrow or buy; neither had I a friend to give me the least hint, or put my instrument in tune.

Thus was I in the situation of a first inventor, left to grope

in the dark, to find out something. I had first my ear to bring into tune before I could tune the instrument, for the ear is the foundation of all music. That is the best tune which best pleases the ear; and he keeps the best time who draws the most music from his tune.

For six months did I use every effort to bring a tune out of an instrument which was so dreadfully out it had no tune in it. Assiduity never forsook me. I was encouraged by a couplet I had seen in Dyche's Spelling Book:—

“Despair of nothing that you would attain,  
Unwearied diligence your point will gain”.

When I was able to lay a foundation, the improvement and the pleasure were progressive. Wishing to rise, I borrowed a dulcimer, made one by it, then learned to play upon it; but in the fabrication of this instrument I had neither timber to work upon, tools to work with, nor money to purchase either. It is said, “Necessity is the mother of invention”. I pulled a large trunk to pieces, one of the relics of my family, but formerly the property of Thomas Parker, the first Earl of Macclesfield. And as to tools, I considered that the hammer-key and the plyers, belonging to the stocking-frame, would supply the place of hammer and pincers. My pocket-knife was all the edge-tools I could raise; and a fork, with one limb, was made to act in the double capacity of sprig-sawl and gimlet.

I quickly was master of this piece of music; for if a man can play upon one instrument, he may soon learn upon any.

A young man, apprentice to a baker, happening to see the dulcimer, asked if I could perform upon it? Struck with the sound, and with seeing me play with, what he thought, great ease, he asked if I would part with the instrument, and at what price? I answered in the affirmative, and for sixteen shillings. He gave it.

I told him, “If he wanted advice, or his instrument wanted tuning, I would assist him.” “O no, there's not a doubt but I shall do.” I bought a coat with the money, and constructed a better instrument.

Seeing him a short time after, "Well, how do you succeed?" "O, rarely, well; I can play part of *Over the hills and far away*." This excited a smile of satisfaction in both.

Our next meeting produced the same question, to which he replied, "O, I could not make it do; which provoked me so much that I took a broomstick and *whacked* the strings till I broke them; then knocked the body to pieces, and burned it in the oven."

1744.—This year was ushered in and ushered out with the same pursuit after music. The relish increased with the knowledge: I wished to soar, but poverty clipped my wings.

The corporation, attended by the waits, went in solemn procession to declare war against France. I marched close by the music with great attention and pleasure.

At Christmas my servitude expired. I must now launch into the world upon my own bottom. I had hitherto been under the care of others; but now I must attend to the compass myself, and steer the vessel. The thought crossed me with anxiety.

I had served two seven years to two trades, neither of which I could subsist upon. During this servitude I had earned about seven pounds over-work, which, with a debt I had contracted to my uncle of thirty shillings, had frugally furnished me with apparel.

[William Hutton continued his autobiography down to the good old age of ninety; but here we must break off with the end of his boyhood, since we cannot follow him through his long and honourable career as a citizen of Birmingham, as an author as well as a prosperous bookseller, and as a man in several ways in advance of his time. Let us conclude with his character as given by his daughter, Catherine Hutton, herself also well known in the world of letters.]

My father recollected, with gratitude to Providence, the success that had crowned the exertions of his youth. "How thankful ought I to be," he would say, "for the comforts that surround me! Where should I have been now if I had continued a stockinger? I must have been in the workhouse. They all go there when they cannot see to work. I have all I can wish for. I think of these things every day."

My father seldom spoke of his death; but I have reason to believe he constantly watched its approach, and was sensible of every advance he made towards it. Some expressions I have mentioned tend to prove this; and while I was at Malvern he said to his attendant, "I shall not be long for this world."

My father has delineated his own character in the history he has written of his life. Little more remains to be said, and I hope that little will not be too much.

I think the predominant feature in my father's character was the *love of peace*. No quarrel ever happened, within the sphere of his influence, in which he did not act the part of a mediator, and endeavour to conciliate both sides; and I believe no quarrel ever happened, where he was concerned, in which he did not relinquish a part of his right. The first lessons he taught his children were, that *the giving up an argument was meritorious*, and that *having the last word was a fault*.

My father's love of peace made him generally silent on those inexhaustible subjects of dispute and animosity, religion and politics. His sufferings at the riots drew his sentiments from him, and he gave them without reserve. They will be found too liberal for the present day. Public opinion, like the pendulum of a clock, cannot rest in the centre. From the time of the riots it has been verging towards bigotry and slavery. Having reached its limits, it will verge towards the opposite extremes, infidelity and anarchy. Truth is the centre; and perhaps my father's opinions may not have been wide of the mark.

The few lessons of good breeding that reached my father in early life were never forgotten by him. His friend, Mr. Webb, had said, "Billy, never interrupt any person who is speaking." My father was a patient hearer. He waited till his turn came; and frequently, in the clamour of a public table, his turn did not come, and what he had to say was lost. I never knew him make one of two persons speaking together. He did not begin till another had ended, and he stopped if another began.

My father's conduct towards his children was admirable.

He allowed us a greater degree of liberty than custom gives to a child; but, if he saw us transgressing the bounds of order, a single word, and that a mild one, was sufficient to bring us back. He strongly inculcated the confession of an error. A fault acknowledged was not merely amended: in his estimation it almost became a virtue.

My father was an uncommon instance of resolution and perseverance, and an example of what these can perform. Another, I might almost say, every other, would have sunk under supposed inability, when he was falling to the ground; and would, therefore, have been irrecoverably in bed, while he was still walking. My father was so tenacious of his activity and independence, that he performed every one of his accustomed actions till it was not possible for him to do it once more. I have no doubt that he prolonged his powers and his life by these exertions. The ill consequences of exercise are precarious, those of sitting still are certain.

My father was nearly five feet six inches in height, well made, strong, and active; a little inclined to corpulence, which did not diminish till within four or five months of his death. From this period he became gradually thin. His countenance was expressive of sense, resolution, and calmness; though when irritated or animated he had a very keen eye. Such was the happy disposition of his mind, and such the firm texture of his body, that ninety-two years had scarcely the power to alter his features, or make a wrinkle in his face.

## THOMAS HOWLCROFT.

[This once popular dramatist and miscellaneous writer of last century began upon his death-bed an autobiography which he could carry down only to the age of fifteen. The fragment, with its lively pictures of his youthful experiences as little better than a tramp, then as a stable boy, deserves to take high place among records of early struggles. It is here presented almost entire, ending abruptly, as cut short by the author's death.]

I was born in London, in Orange Court, Leicester Fields, on the 10th day of December, 1745, old style; and was baptized and registered in St. Martin's Church, where my name is erroneously written Howlcroft. In a will of one of my uncles, which may be seen in Doctors' Commons, the name is spelt Houldecroft. From this it appears that our family did not pay much attention to subjects of orthography, or think the manner in which their name was spelt a matter of importance.

Most persons, I believe, retain through life a few strong impressions of very early childhood. I have a recollection of being played with by my parents, when very young, and of the extreme pleasure it gave me. On another occasion, as I and one or two of my brothers or sisters were playing in the court, and kneeling and peeping down a cellar window, where there were some fowls, a shutter that belonged to the window, and was fastened up, by some means or other got loose, and entirely cut off one side of my sister Anne's thumb;—a disaster never afterwards to be forgotten. My father one day whipped me very severely for crying to go to a school in the neighbourhood, where children were sent rather to keep them out of the way, than to learn anything. He afterwards ordered an apprentice he had to take me to school. This apprentice was an exceedingly hard-featured youth, with thick lips, wide mouth, broad nose, and his face very much marked with the small-pox, but very kind and good-tempered. I perfectly remember his carrying me in my petticoats, consoling me as we went, and

giving me something nice to eat. Perhaps I bear his features in mind the more accurately, because I occasionally saw him afterwards, till I was seven or eight years old, when he used to visit my father, who was then under misfortunes. He seldom came without something kind to say, or good to give: but his last and capital gift, too precious to be ever forgotten, consisted of two small books. One was the *History of Parismus and Parismenes*, and the other, of the *Seven Champions of Christendom*. These were to me an inestimable treasure, that often brought the rugged, good-natured Dick to my remembrance, with no slight sense of obligation.

Till I was about six years old my father kept a shoemaker's shop in Orange Court; and I have a faint recollection that my mother dealt in greens and oysters. After I became a man, my father more than once pointed out the house to me: the back of it looks into the King's Mews, and it is now No. 13. My father was fond of speculation, and very adventurous. I believe he had been set up in trade by my Uncle John, who lived several years, first as a helper, and afterwards as a groom in the king's stables; where, being an excellent economist, he saved money. For a time, my father, through John's influence, was admitted a helper in the stables; but he did not continue there long, not having his brother's perseverance. How or when he procured the little knowledge of shoemaking which he had, I do not recollect; though I have heard him mention the fact. He was not bred to the trade. He and a numerous family of his brothers and sisters all spent their infancy in the field country; or, as I have heard him describe it, the most desolate part of Lancashire, called Martin's Muir, where my grandfather was a cooper; a man, according to my father's account, possessed of good qualities, but passionate, and a dear lover of Sir John Barleycorn. My grandmother was always mentioned by my father with very great respect.

At the period of which I speak, the west end of London swarmed with chairmen; who, that they might tread more safely, had their shoes made differently from those of other people; to which particular branch of the trade my father applied

himself with some success. But he was not satisfied with the profits he acquired by shoemaking: he was very fond of horses, and having some knowledge of them, he became a dealer in them. Few persons but the great, at this time, kept any sort of carriage. It was common, for those who wished to ride out, to hire a horse for the day; and my father kept several horses for this purpose. If his word was to be taken, they were such as were not very easily to be matched. The praise he bestowed on them for their performances, and his admiration of their make and beauty, were strong and continued. Young as I was, he earnestly wished to see me able to ride. He had a beautiful pony (at least, so he called, and so I thought it): but it was not more remarkable for its beauty than its animation. To hold it, required all my father's strength and skill; yet he was determined I should mount this pony, and accompany him, whenever he took a ride. For this purpose my petticoats were discarded; and, as he was fonder of me than even of his horses; nay, or of his pony, he had straps made, and I was buckled to the saddle, with a leading-rein fastened to the muzzle of the pony, which he carefully held. These rides, with the oddity of our equipage and appearance, sometimes exposed us to the ridicule of bantering acquaintance; but I remember no harm that happened.

About the same time my father indulged another whim; whether he was led to it by any particular accident, I cannot tell. I must have been about five years old when he put me under the tuition of a player on the violin, who was a public performer of some repute. Either parental fondness led my father to believe, or he was flattered into the supposition, that I had an uncommon aptitude for the art I had been put to learn. I shall never forget the high praises I received, the affirmation that I was a prodigy, and the assurances my teachers gave that I should soon be heard in public. These dreams were never realized.

My father was under great obligations to my Uncle John, and was afraid, especially just at that time, of disobliging him. My uncle's pride took the alarm; and after marking his dis



approbation, he asked with contempt, "Do you mean to make a fiddler of the boy?" My practice on the violin therefore ceased; and it is perhaps worth remarking, that, though I could play so well, before I was six years old, I had wholly forgotten the art at the age of seven; for, after my master left me, I never touched the instrument. In the days of my youthful distress I have sometimes thought, with bitter regret, of the absurd pride of my uncle.

Thus far my infantine life had passed under much more favourable circumstances than are common to the children of the poor. But when I was about six years old the scene suddenly changed, a long train of increasing hardships began, and I have no doubt my sufferings were rendered more severe from a consciousness of the little I had suffered till then. This may therefore be properly considered as the first remarkable era in my life.

How far the state of my father's affairs might contribute to the steps he took, is more than I now can tell: but on a sudden the housekeeping broke up, the horses were sold, and we went into Berkshire, somewhat beyond Ascot Heath, about thirty miles from London, where my father had taken a house. What became of his effects, in what manner they were sold, and of every circumstance of that kind, I am totally ignorant.

I suppose the time of our residence in Berkshire to have been about twelve months. The house where we lived was situated at the corner of the road, the last of a small green, or common, down which the road had a descent. For I remember my father at first had a tall, high-boned hack, on the bare back of which I used, by his order, to gallop down the hill, though I felt great difficulty in keeping my seat. It was in this retired spot that my father himself began to teach me to read. The task at first I found difficult, till the idea one day suddenly seized me of catching all the sounds I had been taught from the arrangement of the letters; and my joy at this amazing discovery was so great, that the recollection of it has never been effaced. After that, my progress was so rapid,

that it astonished my father. He boasted of me to everybody; and that I might lose no time, the task he set me was eleven chapters a day in the Old Testament. I might, indeed, have deceived my father by skipping some of the chapters, but a dawning regard for truth, aided by the love I had of reading, and the wonderful histories I sometimes found in the Sacred Writings, generally induced me to go through the whole of my task. One day, as I was sitting at the gate with my Bible in my hand, a neighbouring farmer, coming to see my father, asked me if I could read the Bible already? I answered, yes; and he desired me to let him hear me. I began at the place where the book was open, read fluently, and afterwards told him, that if he pleased he should hear the tenth chapter of Nehemiah. At this he seemed still more amazed, and, wishing to be convinced, bade me read. After listening till he found I could really pronounce the uncouth Hebrew names so much better and more easily than he supposed to be within the power of so young a child, he patted my head, gave me a penny, and said I was an uncommon boy. It would be hard to say whether his praise or his gift was most flattering to me. Soon after, my father's apprentice, the kind-hearted Dick, who came backward and forward to my father on his affairs, brought me the two delightful histories I have above-mentioned, which were among those then called Chapman's Books. It was scarcely possible for anything to have been more grateful to me than this present. *Parismus and Parismenes*, with all the adventures detailed in the *Seven Champions of Christendom*, were soon as familiar to me as my catechism, or the daily prayers I repeated kneeling before my father. Oh, how I loved poor Dick!

My father was an excellent pedestrian, and would often walk to London and back again, more than sixty miles, in the same day. Sometimes he dined at home, and went to London in the afternoon, and even then, I rather think, though I cannot be certain, that he made a point of sleeping in his own house. In height he was about five feet four, perfectly free from corpulency, sober, and satisfied with plain, wholesome diet. He

used to speak with great self-complacency of the manner in which he overcame competitors in walking, with whom he sometimes chanced to meet. "I have been overtaken by tall men," he would say, "with whom I could not keep pace, and they have bid me good-bye, and told me they should be in London at such a time before me; but they were every one of them mistaken. They could not proceed without stopping to rest, and taking their pint of beer, their bread and cheese, or whatever they could get to eat and drink. I was never far behind them, I wanted nothing to eat or drink, I was not weary, I passed the houses in which they were sitting, and got forward sometimes more than a mile before them; while they would make another call, perhaps, and another, so that I always arrived before them."

One afternoon, however, he was desirous of going to town at a later hour than usual, and therefore, for expedition's sake, he borrowed a light gray horse of a neighbour, on condition that it should be returned that evening. He then mounted, and placed me behind him, trusting to my courage and good sense for finding my way home with the horse. I know not how far he took me, except that we passed over some part of Ascot Heath, if not all of it; and about an hour before it was dark, he alighted, left me on horseback, and carefully gave me such directions as he supposed I could not mistake. In this he conjectured rightly; I began to trot away, anxious to get home before it was too dark; but, unluckily for me, some time after we had parted, with no human being in sight, nor any likelihood of meeting one, the horse stumbled among some ruts, and threw my hat off. To have lost my hat would have been a terrible misfortune; I therefore ventured to alight and pick it up. Then it was that I perceived my distress. I found every attempt I made to remount wholly ineffectual, and all I could do was to endeavour to drag the sluggish animal along, and cry bitterly. Twilight was fast approaching, and I alone on the heath (I knew not how far from home), and never expecting to reach that desired place that evening. At length, however, the white railing of the race-course on Ascot Heath

came in sight, and I conceived hopes of remounting. Accordingly, I with great difficulty prevailed on my gray nag to stand tolerably nigh the railing, on which I clambered, and with almost unspeakable joy I found myself once more seated on his back. I had another piece of good fortune; for, before I had gone far, a neighbour happened to be passing, who, seeing a child so circumstanced, came up, asked me some questions, heard the story I had to tell, and not only conveyed me safe to the village, but to his own house, where he gave me something comfortable to eat and drink, sent the horse to its right owner, and put me into the charge of some one, who took me home.

I know nothing that tends so much as the anecdotes of childhood, when faithfully recorded, to guide the philosopher through that very abstruse but important labyrinth, the gradations that lead to the full stature, peculiar form, temperament, character, and qualities of the man. I am therefore anxious to recount all those concerning myself, which I suppose may conduce to this purpose.

My father was very fond, and not a little vain, of me. He delighted to show how much I was superior to other children, and this propensity had sometimes a good effect. One evening, when it was quite dark, daylight having entirely disappeared, and the night being cloudy, he was boasting to a neighbour of my courage; and his companion, seeming rather to doubt, my father replied he would put it immediately to the proof. "Tom," said he, "you must go to the house of Farmer such-a-one" (I well remember the walk, but not the name of the person), "and ask whether he goes to London to-morrow." I was startled, but durst not dispute his authority, it was too great over me, besides that my vanity to prove my valour was not a little excited: accordingly, I took my hat and immediately obeyed.

The house I was sent to, as far as I can remember, must have been between a quarter and half a mile distant; and the road that led to it was by the side of the hedge on the left hand of the common. However, I knew the way well enough,

and proceeded; but it was with many stops, starts, and fears. It may be proper to observe here, that although I could not have been without courage, yet I was really, when a child, exceedingly apprehensive, and full of superstition. When I saw magpies, it denoted good of ill luck, according as they did or did not cross me. When walking, I pored for pins or rusty nails; which, if they lay in certain directions, foreboded some misfortune. Many such whims possessed my brain; I was therefore not at all free from notions of this kind on the present occasion. However, I went forward on my errand, humming, whistling, and looking as carefully as I could; now and then making a false step, which helped to relieve me, for it obliged me to attend to the road. When I came to the farmhouse, I delivered my message. "Bless me, child," cried the people within, "have you come this dark night all alone?" "Oh, yes," I said, assuming an air of self-consequence. "And who sent you?" "My father wanted to know," I replied equivocally. One of them then offered to take me home; but this I would by no means admit. My whole little stock of vanity was roused, and I hastily scampered out of the house, and was hidden in the dark. My return was something, but not much less alarming than my journey thither. At last I got safely home, glad to be rid of my fears, and inwardly not a little elated with my success. "Did you hear or see anybody, Tom," said my father, "as you went or came back?" "No," said I, "it was quite dark; not but I thought, once or twice, I did hear something behind me." In fact, it was my father and his companion, who had followed me at a little distance. This, my father, in fondly praising me for my courage, some time after told me.

All that I now recollect more of this residence in Berkshire is, that my father, after having been from home longer than usual, put a sudden, and to me unexpected, end to it—took me with him, and for some time travelled round the country.

The first place I distinctly remember myself, was London, where I have a faint notion of having been among boys with

their school-books. Whether I was sent to school for a week or two, while my father and mother were adjusting their affairs and preparing for their new career, is more than I can affirm or deny: though I have no recollection of acquiring any knowledge, a thing which, before this, had begun to make a strong impression on me. If I were really sent to school, it must have been for a very short time, nor could I have been provided with books or other means of improvement. And, indeed, my father was so straitened in his circumstances, that my mother very soon after agreed to turn pedlar, hung a basket with pins, needles, tape, garters, and other small haberdashery on her arm, and hawked them through the outskirts and neighbourhood of London, while I trotted after her. I might at first, perhaps, feel some disgust at this employment: but use soon reconciled me to it, as the following anecdote will show.

I cannot say what my father's employment was while I and my mother were, what they emphatically called *tramping* the villages, to hawk our pedlary. It may be presumed, however, that it was not very lucrative, for he soon after left it, and he and my mother went into the country, hawking their small-wares, and dragging me after them. They went first to Cambridge, and afterwards, as their hopes of success led them, traversed the neighbouring villages. Among these, we came to one which I thought most remarkably clean, well built, and unlike villages in general: my father said it was the handsomest in the kingdom. We must have been very poor, however, and hard driven on this occasion: for here it was that I was either encouraged, or commanded, one day, to go by myself from house to house, and beg. Young as I was I had considerable readiness in making out a story, and on this day my little inventive faculties shone forth with much brilliancy. I told one story at one house, another at another, and continued to vary my tale just as the suggestions arose: the consequence of which was, that I moved the good country-people exceedingly. One called me a poor fatherless child: another exclaimed, "What a pity! I had so much sense!" a third patted my head,

and prayed God to preserve me, that I might make a good man. And most of them contributed either by scraps of meat, farthings, bread and cheese, or other homely offers, to enrich me, and send me away with my pockets loaded. I joyfully brought as much of my stores as I could carry, to the place of rendezvous my parents had appointed, where I astonished them by again reciting the false tales I had so readily invented. My father, whose passions were easily moved, felt no little conflict of mind as I proceeded. I can now, in imagination, see the working of his features. "God bless the boy! I never heard the like!" Then turning to my mother, he exclaimed with great earnestness: "This must not be! the poor child will become a common-place liar! A hedge-side rogue!—He will learn to pilfer!—Turn a confirmed vagrant!—Go on the highway when he is older, and get hanged. He shall never go on such errands again." How fortunate for me in this respect that I had such a father! He was driven by extreme poverty, restless anxiety, and a brain too prone to sanguine expectation, into many absurdities, which were but the harbingers of fresh misfortunes: but he had as much integrity and honesty of heart as perhaps any man in the kingdom, who had no greater advantages. It pleases me now to recollect, that, though I had a consciousness that my talents could keep my parents from want, I had a still stronger sense of the justice of my father's remarks. As it happened, I had not only read and remembered the consequences of good and evil, as they are pointed out in the Scriptures, but I had also become acquainted with some of the renowned heroes of fable; and to be a liar, a rogue, and get hanged, did not square well with the confused ideas I had either of goodness or greatness, or with my notions of a hero.

From the vicinity of Cambridge we passed on to the Isle of Ely, hawking our different wares, pins, laces, tempting ribbons, and garters, in every village we came to; arriving first at Peterborough, and afterwards taking care to be present at Wisbeach fair. Markets, fairs, and wakes were indeed the great objects which regulated all our motions.

The Isle of Ely, from its marshy nature, is much infested by the reptile tribes. One day, as we were pushing forward through the grass by the road side, I saw what I imagined to be a beautiful ribbon, striped and spotted with various colours, but chiefly blue and white; and with great surprise, catching hold of my mother's arm, I cried, "Look, Mammy, look!" No less admiring was she than myself, and equally mistaken,—“Bless me,” said she, “how pretty!” Then stooping to take it up, she touched it; but our surprise now greatly increased, when a large snake uncoiled itself, darted forward, and in a moment was out of sight. My father was much amused at the terror we felt. He had lived for some time with a farmer, and knew the difference between the adder and common snake tribes, with the harmless nature of the latter. For in summer and autumn, whenever he could come upon a sleeping snake, he made it his diversion to catch it by the tail, shake it when it attempted to rise, and bring it with him wherever he was going. A country-woman, with whom we met shortly after, told us that the breed of snakes was so common in those parts, that they could not be kept out of their cottages, where they frequently took shelter, especially in the night.

The things of which I have the most distinct recollection as connected with the Isle of Ely, are its marshy lands, multiplied ditches, long broad grass, low and numerous draining mills, with the cathedral of Peterborough, which I thought beautiful; but above all, those then dear and delightful creatures, a quack doctor, peeping from behind his curtain, and that droll devil, his merry Andrew, apparitions first beheld by me at Wisbeach fair. It was a pleasure so unexpected, so exquisite, so rich and rare, that I followed the merry Andrew and his drummer through the streets, gliding under arms and between legs, never long together three yards apart from him; almost bursting with laughter at his extreme comicality; tracing the gridirons, punchinellos, and pantomime figures on his jacket; wondering at the manner in which he twirled his hat in the air, and again caught it so dexterously on his head. My curiosity did not abate, when he examined to see if there was not some little



devil hid within it, with a grotesque squint of his eyes, twist of his nose, and the exclamation, "Oh, ho! have I caught you, Mr. Imp?"—making a snatch at the inside of his hat, grasping at something, opening his hand, finding nothing in it, and then crying, with a stupid stare,—"No! you see, good folks, the devil of any devil is here!" Then again, when he returned to the stage, followed by an eager crowd, and in an imperious tone was ordered by his master to mount,—to see the comical jump he gave, alighting half upright, roaring with pretended pain, pressing his hip, declaring he had put out his collar bone, crying to his master to come and cure it, receiving a kick, springing up and making a somersault; thanking his master kindly for making him well; yet the moment his back was turned, mocking him with wry faces; answering the doctor, whom I should have thought extremely witty, if Andrew had not been there, with jokes so apposite and whimsical as never failed to produce roars of laughter. All this was to me assuredly, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul!" As it was the first scene of the kind I had ever witnessed, so it was the most ecstatic. I think it by no means improbable, that an ardent love of the dramatic art took root in my mind from the incidents of that day.

There are short periods of my life, during which, when endeavouring to retrace them, I am surprised to find I can scarcely recollect anything of what happened, and this was one of them. How we got from the Isle of Ely—where we went—what we did—the reasons that induced my father and mother to forsake the business of pedlars—whether he returned to London for a short time, and again sat down to what he called his trade, namely, that of making, or rather mending shoes—are questions which I cannot answer. This interval, though not very long, must have been of some duration; for the first remarkable fact that presents itself to my mind, is the strong recollection I have of being at Coventry, walking with my little sister in my arms in a large desolate back-yard, at the outskirts of the city. Through this yard, a deep, open

common sewer ran, into which my sister either sprang or fell by accident, where she must almost instantly have been suffocated, had not I, instead of being terrified, and running to call for help, immediately thrown myself on the ground, and dragged her safely out. I ran, at once terrified and rejoiced, to tell my father and mother what had happened, and was rewarded by the praises I received from them for the good sense and intrepidity I had shown. It has been my good fortune to have saved more lives than one, but this was the first.

In and of Coventry itself, I remember several little traits and incidents. I was much taken with the virtue, beauty, and magnanimity of Lady Godiva:—the misfortune that befel Peeping Tom was a fine mark of Divine justice; and I was equally delighted to think that all the people had bread enough, as I supposed, when the excessive toll was taken off. Coventry Cross was then standing, and though greatly dilapidated, made no little impression on my imagination, as I walked round and round it, and gazed at its spiral forms, commensurate proportions, numerous little recesses and figures, though half destroyed, that suggested ideas of beauty, sanctity, and the events of past times. Not that I would have it supposed that these ideas passed individually and distinctly through the mind of an uninstructed boy, little more than eight years old, but the effect of them altogether was such as I have here described.

My father, though active and of a strong constitution, was short, slight-built, and wholly unable to contend with men in general. But he was passionate, and free-spoken if he thought himself ill-used, and had thus given offence to a powerful, brutal rival in the market, by whom he was treated with great contempt, and threatened with personal chastisement. I well remember the grief and indignation I then felt that my father should be thus degraded; and that he, I, and all belonging to him, should be unable to redress his wrongs.

This happened on a market-day; and I believe it was on the same day that my father, thinking me almost perished with the cold, gave me a pint of ale to drink, which so far inebriated

me, that I was quite ashamed. My father himself was a man of such sobriety, that I had heard him often declare that he had never in his life been overcome with liquor. Besides, I loved religious books, and they all informed me drunkenness was a great sin. I therefore took it very much to heart, that I should so early have been guilty of a crime of which he was entirely innocent. However, he consoled me by taking the blame upon himself for giving me more to drink than I could be supposed able to bear.

It was here that I saw a person of a very odd and almost unaccountable appearance. I could not discover whether he was young or old; for he seemed to be both. The size of his limbs, the form of his body, the colour of his hair and face, were such as might have belonged to a boy of eighteen; and to correspond with these he had something of sprightliness in his manner; but his gait and deportment were those of old age; he stooped in the shoulders, and he had the greatest number of small wrinkles in his face that I have ever seen. The reason why I mention many of these (in themselves perhaps insignificant) circumstances, is, that the inquiring reader may be able to trace the bent and progress of my mind, and how far I was prone to observation.

Having been bred to an employment for which he was very ill-fitted, both from his physical and mental powers and propensities, the habit that became most rooted in and most fatal to my father, was a fickleness of disposition, a thorough persuasion, after he had tried one means of providing for himself and family for a certain time, that he had discovered another far more profitable and secure. Steadiness of pursuit was a virtue at which he could never arrive; and I believe few men in the kingdom had in the course of their lives been the hucksters of so many small wares, or more enterprising dealers in articles of a halfpenny value.

Different circumstances have fixed in my mind the recollection of many of the towns to which we went, and a variety of the articles of my father's traffic, but in all probability not a

tenth part of either. I at this moment remember in particular a market-day at Macclesfield in Cheshire; not so much from what we sold, though I believe it was some sort of wooden ware, of which trenchers and spoons were in those days staple articles, as from a person that caught my attention there. This was a most robust and boisterous woman, more than middle-aged, with a very visible beard and a deep bass voice. I was never weary of listening to, looking at her, and watching all she said or did. I could scarcely think it possible there was such a woman.

I should mention that, to carry on these itinerant trades, my father had begun with purchasing an ass, and bought more as he could; now and then increasing his store by the addition of a ragged pony, or a worn-out, weather-beaten Rozinante. In autumn, he turned his attention to fruit, and conveyed apples and pears in hampers from villages to market-towns; among the latter of which I remember were Tamworth, Newark-upon-Trent, and Hinckley. The bad nourishment I met with, the cold and wretched manner in which I was clothed, and the excessive weariness I endured in following these animals day after day, and being obliged to drive creatures perhaps still more weary than myself, were miseries much too great, and loaded my little heart with sorrows far too pungent ever to be forgotten. By-roads and high-roads were alike to be traversed, but the former far the oftenest, for they were then almost innumerable, and the state of them in winter would scarcely at present be believed.—Speaking of scantiness of diet, an incident happened to me which shows the great power of taste, or rather of imagination, over the appetite, and which ought to be treasured in the memory of those who endeavour to force the appetites of children. I was travelling after my father in Staffordshire near Wosely bridge, where a country gentleman had a seat. I went into the house, whether alone or for what purpose I totally forget; but I well remember the fragrant steams of the kitchen, and the longing wishes they excited. As I was going away, a good-natured servant said, “Perhaps you are hungry, little boy?” To which, bashfully hanging

my head, I answered, "Yes". "Well, then, stop a minute, I'll give you something nice;" and accordingly, a large basin of rich pease-soup was brought me, and a spoon. I had never eaten, nor perhaps heard of such a thing before; but the moment I smelt it and applied it to my palate, I conceived such an excessive dislike to it, that though I felt ashamed, and made every effort I could, I found it impossible to swallow a spoonful. Some servants were by my side, and one of them asked, "What! don't you like it? can't you eat it?" To which, perfectly abashed and again hanging my head, I replied, "No". "Ha!" said one of them, "you are a dainty chap; however, I wonder who keeps you, or what it is you do like!" I made no reply, but, hungry as I was and wretchedly disappointed, hurried away as fast as I could to overtake my father. I should remark, that since I have grown up pease-soup has always been a favourite dish with me; perhaps, accustomed as I had been from childhood to the plainest food, and empty as my stomach then was, this high-flavoured composition would unavoidably excite disgust.

My father became by turns a collector and vendor of rags, a hardwareman, a dealer in buckles, buttons, and pewter-spoons; in short, a trafficker in whatever could bring gain. But there was one thing which fixed his attention longer than any other, and which, therefore, I suppose he found the most lucrative, which was to fetch pottery from the neighbourhood of Stone, in Staffordshire, and to hawk it through all the North of England. Of all other travelling, this was the most continual, the most severe, and the most intolerable. Derbyshire, Cheshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire, the towns and cities of Birmingham, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Coventry, Derby, Burton-upon-Trent, Litchfield, Tamworth, Atherstone, Nuneaton, Lutterworth, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, nay, as far up as Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Daventry, Northampton, Newport-Pagnell, Banbury (I well remember its delicious cakes); and on the east, Stamford in Lincolnshire, Grantham, and in short every place within possible reach, or where pottery might be sold, received visits from my father, the asses, and poor me.

What became of my mother, during these excursions, I do not accurately recollect, except that she was, with us occasionally, as at Macclesfield for instance, where the woman with the beard and bass voice so fixed my attention. She was also with us at Litchfield and Coventry. Most probably she was in general left at home, with her child or children.

By home, I mean an old house, half in ruins, about two miles on the north-east side of Rugeley, with a kitchen-garden, paddock, and croft, which afforded some scanty supplies to man and beast, when my father found it convenient, or thought proper, to rest a little from his labours; but to me this house often became a den of misery. I was not yet nine years old, but I had a variety of employments. First, I was the messenger of the family to Rugeley, whither I took money, and brought back delicious white bread, for which it was then famous, with such minor articles as were wanted. But when trusted by myself, I could not help loitering on the road, diverting myself with whatever caught my attention, and examining every new object with an idle, boyish curiosity, from which I derived little profit. So that a journey, which ought to have been performed in less than two hours, generally took me more than half a day. I knew the consequences, and had a kind of horror of them, yet could not resist, could not prevail upon myself to go straight forward; such was the united force of habit and curiosity.

My father was alike extreme in his anger and in his compassion. He used to beat me, pull my hair up by the roots, and drag me by the ears along the ground, till they ran with blood. Indeed my repeated faults were so unpardonable, that he could scarcely blame himself. Yet probably within an hour after he had exercised his severity upon me, he would break out into passionate exclamations of fondness, alarming himself lest he should some time or other do me a serious mischief, and declaring that rather than so, he would a thousand times prefer instant death.

Chastisements like these were grievous, but they were by no means the whole of what I had to encounter. I know not

how it happened, but at this early age I was entrusted with business, rather like an adult than a child.

Towards Litchfield, on the right, lay Cannock heath and town; and adjoining to this heath, on the left, there were coal-pits situated in a remarkably heavy clay country: (I speak from childish recollection, and may therefore expect to be pardoned, should I in description commit any local errors; as I have never been at Cannock, the coal-pits, or the heath, since that period). Desirous of employing his asses, yet averse to go himself (I know not for what reason), my father frequently sent me to these coal-pits to get a single ass loaded, and to drive him over the heath to Rugeley, there to find a customer for my coals. The article was so cheap, and so near, that the profits could be but very small, yet they were something. Had the weather been fine when I was sent on these errands, the task would not have been so difficult, nor the wonder so great; but at the time I was unfortunately sent there, I have a perfect recollection of deep ruts, of cattle, both asses and horses, unable to drag their legs through the clay, and of carts and wagons that were set fast in it. I do not mean that these accidents happened every day, but they were common to the place; and to poor helpless me, with a creature that could scarcely stand under its burden, they were not less frequent than to others. When anybody that could assist me happened to be near, I thought myself in luck; but if I was obliged to run from coal-pit to coal-pit, to request the man who turned the wheel to come and help me, the chance of compliance was little. I often got nothing but a surly curse and a denial, so till some unlooked-for accident brought me relief, there my loaded ass, sometimes heaving a groan at what he suffered, was obliged to stay.

The most remarkable instance of this kind of distress may perhaps deserve recounting. One day, my ass had passed safely through the clay ruts and deep roads, and under my guidance had begun to ascend a hill we had to cross on Cannock Heath on our way to Rugeley. The wind was very high, though while we were on low ground, I had never suspected its

real force. But my apprehensions began to increase with our ascent; and when on the summit of the hill, nearly opposite to two clumps of trees, which are pictured to my imagination as they stood there at that time, it blew gust after gust, too powerful for the loaded animal to resist, and down it came. Through life I have always had a strong sense of the grief and utter despair I then felt. But what a little surprises me is that I have no recollection whatever of the means by which I found relief, but rather of the naked and desolate place in which I was, and my inability to help myself. Could I have unloaded the ass, it would not have been much matter; but the coals were brought from the pit in such masses, that three of them were generally an ass load; any one of which was usually beyond my strength. I have no doubt, however, but I got them but some means or other to Rugeley, and brought the money for them safe to my father, whom I could not help secretly accusing of insensibility, though that was the very reverse of his character.

The coal-pits were situated on the extremity of an old forest, inhabited by large quantities of red deer. At these I always stopped to look; but what surprised and delighted me most was the noble stag, for to him the deer appeared insignificant. Him I often saw bounding along, eyeing objects without fear, and making prodigious leaps over obstacles that opposed his passage. In this free state, indeed, he cannot but excite our admiration.

One little anecdote I must not omit. The reader will naturally suppose that, from the time I began to travel the country with my father and mother, I had little leisure or opportunity to acquire any knowledge by reading. I was too much pressed by fatigue, hunger, cold, and nakedness. Still, however, I cannot but suppose, as well from my own propensity to obey the will of God, as from my father's wish to encourage my inclinations of this kind, that I continued to repeat my prayers and catechism morning and evening, and on Sundays to read the prayer-book and Bible. At any rate, I had not forgotten to read; for while we were at the house



near Rugeley, by some means or other, the song of Chevy Chase came into my possession, which I read over with great delight at our fireside. "My father, who knew that my memory was tolerably retentive, and saw the great number of stanzas the ballad contained, said to me, "Well, Tom, can you get that song by heart?" To this question I very readily answered, "Yes". "In how long a time?" "Why, you know, Father, I have got such work for to-morrow, and what work you will set me for the following days I can't tell; however, I can get it in three days." "What, perfectly?" "Yes." "Well, if you do that, I'll give you a halfpenny." Rejoiced at my father's generosity, "Oh, then, never fear!" said I. I scarcely need add that my task was easily accomplished, and that I then had the valuable sum of a halfpenny at my own disposal.

There was a single instance in which I travelled on foot thirty miles in one day. Whether the miles were measured or computed, is a circumstance which I now forget; but the roads were so heavy, owing to a strong clay soil, that the last quarter of a mile I had to go, I was obliged to confess I could walk no farther, and I was carried on a countryman's shoulders. All those who heard of this, and knew how young, how slight of limb, and stunted in my growth I was, expressed their astonishment, and some their doubts. I think this happened before I was ten years of age.

My father broke up his little establishment near Rugeley, and took me with him into Cheshire, but left me at a village two or three miles from Haslem, where I was intrusted to the care of an old woman who kept a lodging-house, and whom, from the whole of her appearance, as well as her kindness to me, I always remembered with respect. On the evening of my arrival, but later, two travelling Irishmen came in, and were admitted as lodgers. My father had bargained with the old woman, that she was to provide for me; travellers, of course, who come in at sunset and depart at daybreak, provide for themselves, or are obliged to be satisfied with what such barren

abodes can supply. The Irishmen had provided a halfpenny roll between them: what they might have more I do not know. But my good old dame they noticed to be mashing up a plentiful supper of new milk and potatoes for me, a dish in which their hearts delighted. Whether it was contrivance, accident, or according to rule, I cannot say; we did not, however, sup in the presence of the old woman, but in the room in which we all three slept. No sooner were we here, and I had begun in imagination to devour my delicate mashed potatoes, than the Irishmen came up to me, patted my cheeks, told me what a pretty little boy I was, asked me my name, inquired who took care of me, and to what country I was going; and swore by the holy father they never in all their lives saw so sweet a looking boy, and so compliant and good-tempered. "Do, now," said one of them, "let me taste of your mashed potatoes." "Aye, and me too," said the other. "I warrand you don't much care about them! We, now, are a *dale* more used to them in Ireland. I'm sure you'll be very glad to make an exchange. Here, now, here is a very fine halfpenny roll, which is very nice *ating*, and which, to be sure, we bought for our own supper. To be sure, we should be fond enough of it, but we don't care about trifles; and as we have been used to *ate* potatoes all the days of our lives, and you English all like bread, why, if you *plase*, my sweet compliable *fillow*, we will just make a little bit of a swap, and so we shall all *ate* our suppers heartily." The action followed the word. They took my potatoes, and gave me the dry roll; while I, totally disconcerted, and not a little overawed by the wildness of my fellow-lodgers' looks, the strangeness of their brogue, their red whiskers, dark beards, carrotty wigs, and sparkling black eyes, said not a word, but quietly submitted, though I thoroughly regretted the dainty supper I had lost, and saw them devour it with an aching heart.

Whenever I write dialogues like these, it is not to be supposed that I pretend to repeat word for word what was said; after the lapse of so many years, such a pretension would, on the face of it, be absurd. But I do on all such occasions pre-

tend to give a true picture of the impressions that still remain on my mind, to express the tone and spirit in which the words were spoken, and, in general, to repeat a part of the words themselves. I cannot too seriously declare that I write these memoirs with a conscious desire to say nothing but the pure truth; the chief intention of them being to excite an ardent emulation in the breasts of youthful readers, by showing them how difficulties may be endured, how they may be overcome, and how they may at last contribute, as a school of instruction, to bring forth hidden talent.

Next morning early the Irishmen pursued their journey; and when my father returned, I told him in the hearing of our well-meaning old hostess how I had been tricked out of my supper. They immediately joined in reviling the whole Irish nation, concluding, as "the great vulgar and the small" generally do on such occasions, that these two fellows, with the cunning kind of robbery they had committed, exhibited a faithful picture of Ireland and Irishmen. Till corrected either by great experience or conscientious inquiry, the human mind has an almost invincible propensity, when any vice which most excites disgust or contempt is remarked in an individual of a particular country, to affirm that it could belong to no one else, and to ascribe it as a general characteristic to the nation at large.

I believe that my father's intentions, when we left Cheshire, were to exclude himself for a time, by working at the shoe-making business; and that for this purpose he took a circuitous route, with a determination to settle at whatever market-town he should find there was a probability of getting employment. This pursuit led us to Northwich, Knutsford, Congleton, Macclesfield, Sheffield, Chappell-le-Frith, in which country the scenery astonished me, and where I was particularly struck with three conic barren rocks, which, I remarked to my father, were like three sugar loaves. We also went to Buxton, Bakewell, Chesterfield, and Mansfield, where sickness detained us for a time. This sickness was a mutual and dangerous fever,

which we caught, either by our being unable to reach a lodging-house, or to pay for a lodging, and by our sleeping, in consequence, under a damp hedge, an imprudence that had nearly proved fatal to us; nor have I ever ceased at intervals to feel its effects. Some time after our recovery from the fever, I was seized by an asthma, which became so violent, that it was only occasionally I dared venture from the house. I can give no account how we were maintained while we were at Mansfield, nor of the means by which we recovered; but I have a perfect picture before me of a decent, cleanly house, good attendance, and countenance that were kind and cheerful. At the same time, I have no recollection of conceiving ourselves indebted to charity, or of being under any apprehensions of future want; so that I can hardly suppose that the circumstance which first occasioned our illness, arose from pecuniary distress.

After we had recovered sufficient strength, our next remove was to Nottingham, where we lodged in a house not far from the park, with the castle in view, and the brook that winds along the low grounds beneath the height on which it is built. A game which I do not remember to have seen played any where else, and which afforded me no little pleasure, was that of two men having each a round bright ball of iron or steel, to which they had the art of giving an elastic right-line direction along the pathway through the Park; and which, if I am not mistaken, they called playing at long bowls, he who could first attain the goal being the winner. "Spell and null", "bandy", "prison-bars", and other field games, in the address or the activity of which my little heart delighted, long before I was permitted to be a partaker in them, were here among the diversions of the summer evenings.

In many parts, Nottingham is, as I then thought it, a very fine town. To me, who had seen so many, its market-place seemed to claim an undoubted and high superiority. Situated on a gently rising ground, that soon becomes dry after showers, surrounded by inns, shops, and other buildings, and well supplied with almost every article, it is among the largest, most convenient, and handsomest in England. A little beyond it were

two remarkable inns, the White Lion, and the Blackamoor's Head, each possessed of vast cellarage, wines of I know not what age, with viands, beds, and other conveniences, such as it gave me the greatest satisfaction to hear described.

One of our four principal rivers, the noble Trent, flows through the meadows below the town, at no very great distance. The scenery round it, to my boyish apprehension, was grand. When the day and the stream were clear, I have often taken a particular pleasure in watching the shoals of fish of the smaller kind in which it abounded, or in now and then catching a glimpse of some of greater magnitude, or in seeing them brought on shore by the dexterous angler. A village, called the Hermitage, lay on its banks, and thither I delighted to walk, because it was connected with circumstances which interested my imagination. Here, as well as in other places in the outskirts of the town, there were houses cut in the rock; and I could not but fancy them to have been formerly inhabited by a venerable and holy brotherhood of Hermits. These houses were indeed to me objects of the greatest curiosity. I could never cease admiring that men should persevere in hewing themselves out such habitations, and that they should turn a thing so barren to so much use and profit; for these rocks were in fact high banks of sandstone, and on the top of them, that is, on the roofs of their houses, each man had his garden.

I walked much about at Nottingham in company with my father, to whom I was very eager to communicate all my juvenile pleasures, and of whom I also made constant inquiries with respect to the objects we saw. He, however, could oftener make conjectures than give information. I imagine his reason for taking me thus into the air was, as he hoped, to arrest the progress of the asthma, which daily increased, and became alarming; for there were times when I could not walk above a few yards without standing still to recover breath. Such medical people as my father could obtain access to were consulted; but the general opinion was, unless youth and growth should relieve me, the disease was for life. An intelligent surgeon happened to think otherwise: he entertained hopes, he

said, provided an issue was made, and carefully kept open on the inside of each leg below the knee. My father accepted his offer to perforate the skin, and direct me in dressing the issues; for to my known prudence this care was readily committed. The success of the remedy equalled the expectations of the surgeon. The cure, aided no doubt by my youth and cheerful temperament, was progressively visible from week to week, and my joy and thankfulness to my medical guide were great. Whoever he was, I certainly owe him much; but I have forgotten his name. This must have happened in the year 1756 or 1757, but I believe the latter.

Public sights, even though cruel, have been, through all ages, the delight of the herd of mankind. The sessions were just over, and a malefactor, who had been sentenced to death, was left by the judge for execution. My father proposed that we should accompany the crowd, and see what was to be seen. To this I consented; we followed the cart to the gallows, which stood at some distance from the town; and by talking with each other, listening to the remarks that were made, some of them charitable, others tainted with a revengeful spirit, and by frequently stopping to observe the agitation of the poor wretch whose life was so soon to cease, I was thrown into a very pensive state of mind. However, taking my father by the hand, I patiently waited the awful moment when the cap was drawn over the culprit's eyes, and he was suddenly lifted into the air. Here his convulsive struggles, to my young and apprehensive imagination, were intolerable: I soon turned my eyes away, unable to look any longer; and my father, seeing the pain I was in, said, "Come, Tom, let us go". "Oh, yes, yes, father, as fast as we can!" was my reply. The effect on my mind was such, that I made, as I suppose, the first fixed resolution of my life, and declared it in a tone that denoted how determined I was,—“Never again, while I live,” said I, “will I go and see a malefactor put to death.” Five or six and twenty years afterwards, I thought it an act of duty to change this determination when I was first at Paris in the year 1783.

Through life, however, when hanging, and the various ways in which men exterminate each other, have been talked of, I have rarely, if ever, forgotten the poor dying culprit of Nottingham.

It should seem that men have at all times had the good sense to contrast their melancholy and often disgusting institutions with others of an opposite tendency, and that seldom fail, in the very nature of them, to revive the sickening heart, and give it animation and delight.

The time of Nottingham races drew near. My father was a great lover of horses, as I have said; and from his discourse, as well as the little I had seen of these noble animals, I was eager to become better acquainted with them. My father recapitulated the different places at which he had seen horses run, recounted the names of the famous winners he had known, and filled up the picture with the accidents common on such occasions, the amazing cunning of sharpers, the punishments inflicted on some of their detected rogueries; the cries of the betting-chair, the tumult of the crowd when the horses were running, the danger of being too near the course, with the difficulty of keeping it clear, the multitude of gaming and drinking-booths, and all that variety of delightful commotion which was calculated to gratify my boyish fancy. The whole scene was like enchantment; and all my wishes were now centred in its being realized.

Ten days or a fortnight before the time, straggling horses for the different plates began to drop in; and of course to take their morning and evening exercise on the course, where they might be seen. This was a pleasure not to be neglected either by me or my father. I was delighted with the fineness of their limbs, their glossy coats; and not a little amused, when following them from exercise to the stable, if I were but allowed to take a peep, and see how their body-clothes were managed, how the currying and brushing of them was performed, their high straw beds prepared, their long hay carefully chosen, and their oats sifted and re-sifted. Everything about a race-horse is precious: but I pitied them for being so much stinted in

their food, and especially when my father told me it must daily decrease, and that the night before they started they must fast.

But the great and glorious part which Nottingham held in the annals of racing this year arose from the prize of the King's Plate, which was to be contended for by the two horses which everybody I heard speak considered as undoubtedly the best in England, and perhaps equal to any that had ever been known, Childers alone excepted. Their names were, Careless and Atlas. Careless, who had been bred by a worthy and popular baronet of the county (I forget his name), was the decided favourite of every man in Nottingham, gentle or simple. The prowess and equal, if not superior, merit of Atlas, were very boldly asserted by strangers, and particularly by jockeys, betters, and men of the turf. If I do not mistake, Atlas was the property of, and bred by, the Duke of Devonshire. However, he had received a previous defeat in running against Careless; and this defeat the men of Nottingham considered as little less than a certainty of future victory. The opposite party affirmed that Atlas, being a remarkably powerful horse (I think seventeen hands high), had not then attained his full force. There was a story in circulation concerning him, which if true deserved to be remembered. He was a full bred horse out of the Duke's own stud, and consequently was intended for training; but being unwieldy when foaled, and as he grew up becoming still more so, he was rejected on account of his size and clumsiness, and banished to the cart breed. Among these inferiors he remained, till by some accident, either of playfulness or fright, several of them started together, and the vast advantage of Atlas in speed happening to be noticed, it was then thought proper by the grooms to restore him to his blood companions.

Of those who in the least amused or busied themselves with such affairs Careless and Atlas occupied the whole discourse. Many people who seemed to reason plausibly enough on the subject, affirmed that if anything lost the race to Careless, it would be the inferior skill of his rider, by whom neither the



ground nor the powers of the horse would be well economized; he was merely the groom of a country gentleman. When the race was over, these accusations were vociferated with wearisome reiteration.

On the appointed day, however, they both started for the King's Plate; and I believe there was scarcely a heart on the race-course that did not swell with hope and fear. As for my own little one, it was all in rapture for Careless. He was so finely made, his coat was so bright, his eye so beaming, his limbs so animated, and every motion seemed so evidently to declare, "I can fly, if I please", that I could not endure the thought of his being conquered. Alas, for the men of Nottingham, conquered he was! I forget whether it was at two or three heats, but there was many an empty purse on that night, and many a sorrowful heart.

These different incidents had raised a strong desire in my mind to be better acquainted with a subject that had given to me, and as I thought to everybody, so much emotion, and I began to consider what might be done. At that time I was rather a burden to my father than a help. I believe I assisted him a little in the mending of shoes, but my asthma, till very lately, as well as my youth, had prevented my making much progress. At one time, indeed, I had been persuaded, though much against my will, to become apprentice to a stocking-weaver; but this, I forget how, broke off, at which I was very glad: I did not like stocking-weaving. The question now occurred to me, whether it would not be possible to procure the place of a stable-boy at Newmarket. I was at this time, in point of clothing, in a very mean, not to say ragged condition, and in other respects was not much better off. The stable-boys I saw at Nottingham were healthy, clean, well fed, well clothed, and remarkable rather for their impudence than seeming to live under any kind of fear or hardship. Except their impudence, I liked everything else I saw about them; and concluded that if I could obtain so high a situation as this, I should be very fortunate.

These reflections preyed so much upon my mind that I was at last induced to mention them to my father; and he, having a predilection for everything belonging to a horse, and therefore a high respect for this, the noblest state of that animal's existence, readily fell into my views, and only feared they could not be accomplished. He resolved, however, that trial should be made; and after inquiring among the jockeys, thought it advisable to apply to a Mr. Woodcock, who kept stables four or five miles from Newmarket, where he trained horses intrusted to his care. Mr. Woodcock examined me, asked my age, found I was light of weight, and, as I suppose, liking the answers I gave to his questions, to our very great joy, agreed to take me upon trial. In the course of my life there have been several changes, that each in their turn greatly affected my spirits, and gave me advantages far beyond what I had ever before enjoyed: of these gradual elevations, this was the first. I should now be somebody. I should be intrusted with the management of one of that race of creatures that were the most admired and beloved by me: I should be well clothed, wear a livery, which would show I belonged to one of the great: I should not only have food enough, but of that kind which was highly relishing to the appetite of youth; and, in addition to all this, should receive an annual stipend. I jumped, as it were, from a precarious and mean existence, where I could not tell what worse might happen, into a permanent and agreeable employment. I had only to learn to ride, and perform the duties of a stable-boy, of which I had no fear, for I supposed them far less difficult than I afterwards found they were.

The grooms that reside at, and in the vicinity of, this famed town, are all more or less acquainted with each other; and on Mr. Woodcock's recommendation, I was put under the care of Jack Clarke, who lived with Captain Vernon, he having luckily a led horse, which I was to mount. The day of parting with my father, and of beginning our journey, was an anxious one. He could not too emphatically repeat the few well-meant precepts he had so often given me, nor I too earnestly assure

him I would love and obey him all my life. Notwithstanding his severity, he was passionately fond of me, my heart entered into the same feelings, and there was great and unfeigned affection between us.

As is the custom in travelling with trained horses, we set off early, and walked without hurry. When we stopped to breakfast, the plenty of excellent cold beef, bread and cheese, with the best table-beer, and as much as we pleased, gave me a foretaste of the fortunate change I had made. This, indeed, exceeded my utmost expectations—I was entering upon a new existence, was delighted, full of hope and cheerful alacrity, yet too timid to be presumptuous. Clarke, being a good-tempered lad, and seeing me happy, attempted to play me no tricks whatever. On the contrary, he gave me all the caution and advice he could, to guard me against being drawn into the common-place deceptions, most of them nasty, many of them unhealthy, and all of them tending to make the poor tyro a common laughing-stock, uniformly practised by the resident boys upon every new comer. I do not recollect one-half these tricks; but that with which they begin, if I do not mistake, is to persuade their victim that the first thing necessary for a well-trained stable-boy is to borrow as many waistcoats as he can, and in the morning, after he has dressed and fed his horse, to put them all on, take a race of perhaps two or three miles, return home, strip himself stark naked, and immediately be covered up in the hot dung-hill, which they assure him is the method the grooms take when they sweat themselves down to ride a race. Should the poor fellow follow their directions, they conclude the joke with pailfuls of cold water, which stand ready to throw over him.

Another of their diversions used to be that of hunting the owl, which is already very whimsically described in a book of much humour, and tolerably well known, called *Tim Bobbin's Lancashire Dialect*. To catch the owl is to persuade a booby that there is an owl found at roost in the corner of a barn; that a ladder must be placed against a hole, through which,

when the persons within shall be pleased to hoot and hunt him, he must necessarily fly, as the barn door is shut, and every other outlet closed; that the boy chosen to catch the owl must mount this ladder on the outside, and the purblind animal, they say, will fly directly into his hat. When the owl-catcher is persuaded to all this, and mounts to his post, the game begins: hallooing and absurd noises are made; the fellows within divert themselves with laughing at what is to come, and pretending to call to one another to drive the owl from this place to that; while two or three of them approach nearer and nearer to the hole, when they discharge the contents of their full tubs and pails on the head of the expecting owl-catcher.

Clarke warned me against several other of the games at which I should be invited to play, in most of which there was some whim, but a great deal more of that dirty wit in which ill-bred boys are known to delight. Clarke, however, did me this essential service, that he not only taught me to avoid all the snares he mentioned, but rendered me so wary, that all the time I was among this mischievous crew, I was never once entrapped by them. At this they occasionally expressed great wonder; perhaps, had they known the secret, they would have taken their revenge on Clarke.

The weather through the whole of our journey was fine, the ride highly agreeable, and the instruction and information I received from Clarke made it still more pleasant to me. The only place I can distinctly remember having passed through, and made a short stay at, was Huntingdon.

As I have said, Mr. Woodcock resided in the vicinity of Newmarket, at the distance of three or four miles; and to the house where he lived Clarke immediately took me, gave up his charge, and we parted, I believe, with mutual good-will; at least, my feelings towards him were grateful and friendly. As a thing of course, there must have been stables belonging to the house of Mr. Woodcock, but I cannot recollect what train he had under him; and, to say the truth, I cannot fix

upon any one figure, man, boy, or animal, except a gray filly, on the back of which I was put, and which I was intrusted with the care of.

I doubt if Mr. Woodcock was at home on my arrival. His family was small, and had the air of being genteel. It consisted of himself, his wife, and their daughter, who was about eleven years old. All that I can now recollect of Mrs. and Miss Woodcock is having seen them very neatly dressed in white, that the mother assumed a very superior but obliging manner, and that I stood much in awe of her. Trees were thinly scattered to some distance round the house; the parlour was very neat, and rather spacious. In this I received one of those early lessons in moral honesty, which produce a greater effect on the mind of a child, or even of a youth, than is generally supposed. One afternoon, the tea-things and sugar-basin being set out in the parlour before Mrs. and Miss Woodcock had come down, I was passing the door, and that delicious bait of boyhood, a fine lump of sugar, caught my eye. I looked, considered, looked again, saw nobody, found it irresistible, and venturing, step by step, on tiptoe, seized the tempting prize, thinking myself secure: but as I turned back to hasten away with it, the first object that struck me was a young gentleman, stretched either on a chair or sofa behind the door, with a book in his hand, a look directed to me, and a smile on his countenance. I cannot express the shame I felt; but I immediately returned the sugar to its place, cast down my eyes, and slunk away, most heartily mortified, especially when the young gentleman's smile broke out into a laugh.

I forgot to mention, though it will easily be supposed, that when I entered on my new profession, my dress was changed, and I was made to look something like a stable-boy.

Miss Woodcock was a very neat little girl, and it somehow happened, though I know not by what means, that I soon got rather in favour with her. She would whisper with me when we met near the house, chide me, if she saw what she thought an impropriety, and once or twice condescended to be half or quite angry with me, while I did all in my power to please.

her. These trifling advances, however, which spoke rather the innocence of the age, than the intention of the mind, were soon put an end to by an accident that had nearly proved fatal to me.

Perfectly a novice as I was, though I could sit with seeming safety on a quiet horse, I neither knew how to keep a firm seat, nor suddenly to seize one; and I was almost certain of being thrown if anything that was but a little violent or uncommon happened. I was walking the dark gray filly quite a foot-pace in the forest, when in an instant something startled her, and made her spring aside; by which I was not only unseated and thrown, but, unfortunately for me, my foot hung in the stirrup; her fright was increased, she began to kick and plunge violently, and I received a blow in the stomach, which, though it freed me from the stirrup, left me, as was supposed, for no inconsiderable time, dead. Somebody, I imagine, was riding with me, for the alarm was soon given: I was taken up, carried home, treated with great humanity, and, by bleeding and other medical means, signs of life at length became visible. All that I myself recollect of a circumstance so very serious, and so very near being mortal, was, that I was thrown, kicked, and dreadfully frightened; that some time afterwards I found myself very ill in bed, in a very neat chamber, and that I was spoken to and attended with great kindness till my recovery.

This accident, however, put an end to my jockeyship in the service of Mr. Woodcock: he discovered, a little too late, that the dark gray filly and I could not be trusted safely together. But though he turned me away, he did not desert me. He recommended me to the service of a little deformed groom, remarkably long in the fork, I think of the name of Johnstone, who was esteemed an excellent rider, and had a string of no less than thirteen famous horses, the property of the Duke of Grafton, under his care. This was acknowledged to be a service of great repute; but the shrewd little groom soon discovered that I had all my trade to learn, and I was again dismissed.

After this new disappointment, I felt perhaps a more serious

alarm than is usual with boys at such an age. For, independently of natural sensibility, I had seen so much of the world, had so often been intrusted with its petty affairs, depended so much upon my ability to get for myself, and had been so confident in my assurances to my father that I ran no risk in venturing alone into the world, that my fears were not trifling when I found myself so far from him, thrown out of place, and convicted of being unable to perform the task I had so inconsiderately undertaken. Mr. Johnstone told me I must endeavour to get a place, but that for his part he could say little in my favour; however, he would suffer me to remain a few days among the boys. My despondency was the greater, because, the morning before, when a horse that I was riding shook himself in his saddle, as horses are sometimes observed to do, I fell from his back as much terrified as if he had been rearing, plunging, and kicking. To hardy grooms, and boys that delight in playing the braggart, this was a truly ridiculous instance of cowardice, and was repeated with no little malignity and laughter.

The unforeseen relief that has been given to misfortune under circumstances apparently quite hopeless, has frequently been remarked, and not seldom affirmed to be an incontestible proof of a particular providence.

I know not where I got the information, nor how, but in the very height of my distress, I heard that Mr. John Watson, training and riding groom to Captain Vernon, a gentleman of acute notoriety on the turf, and in partnership with the then Lord March, afterwards Duke of Queensberry, was in want of, but just then found it difficult to procure, a stable-boy. To make this pleasing intelligence still more welcome, the general character of John Watson was that, though he was one of the first grooms in Newmarket, he was remarkable for being good-tempered; yet the manner in which he disciplined his boys, though mild, was effectual, and few were in better repute. One consequence of this, however, was, that if any lad was dismissed by John Watson, it was not easy for him to find a place.

With him Jack Clarke lived, the lad with whom I came from Nottingham: this was another fortunate circumstance, and contributed to inspire me with confidence. My present hopes were so strongly contrasted with my late fears, that they were indeed enviable. To speak for once in metaphor, I had been as one of those who walk in the shadow of the valley of death: an accidental beam of the sun broke forth, and I had a beatific view of heaven.

It was no difficult matter to meet with John Watson; he was so attentive to stable-hours, that, except on extraordinary occasions, he was always to be found. Being first careful to make myself look as much like a stable-boy as I could, I came at the hour of four (the summer hour for opening the afternoon stables, giving a slight feed of oats, and going out to evening exercise), and ventured to ask if I could see John Watson. The immediate answer was in the affirmative. John Watson came, looked at me with a serious, but good-natured, countenance, and accosted me first with, "Well, my lad, what is your business? I suppose I can guess; you want a place?" "Yes, sir." "Who have you lived with?" "Mr. Woodcock, on the forest; one of your boys, Jack Clarke, brought me with him from Nottingham." "How came you to leave Mr. Woodcock?" "I had a sad fall from an iron-gray filly, that almost killed me." "That is bad indeed! and so you left him?" "He turned me away, sir." "That is honest; I like your speaking the truth. So you are come from him to me?" At this question I cast my eyes down, and hesitated, then fearfully answered, "No, sir." "No! what, change masters twice in so short a time?" "I can't help it, sir, if I am turned away." This last answer made him smile. "Where are you now, then?" "Mr. Johnstone gave me leave to stay with the boys a few days." "That is a good sign. I suppose you mean little Mr. Johnstone at the other end of the town?" "Yes, sir." "Well, as you have been so short a time in the stables, I am not surprised he should turn you away; he would have everybody about him as clever as himself; they must all know their business thoroughly. However, they must learn it



somewhere. I will venture to give you a trial, but I must first inquire your character of my good friends, Woodcock and Johnstone. Come to-morrow morning at nine, and you shall have an answer."

It may well be supposed I did not forget the appointment; and a fortunate one I found it, for I was accepted on trial at four pounds or guineas a year, with the usual livery clothing. My station was immediately assigned me. Here was a remarkably quiet three-years-old colt, lately from the discipline of the breaker; and of him I was ordered to take charge, instructed by one of the upper boys in everything that was to be done, and directed to back him and keep pace with the rest, when they went to exercise, only taking care to keep a straight line, and to walk, canter, and gallop the last. Fortunately for me his temper appeared to be so quiet (for he had been put into full training at an early age), that I found not the least difficulty in managing him. My reputation, therefore, among the boys, which is an essential circumstance, suffered no stain.

I ought to mention, that though I have spoken of *Mr.* Johnstone, and may do of more *Misters* among the grooms, it is only because I have forgotten their Christian names; for, to the best of my recollection, when I was at Newmarket, it was the invariable practice to denominate each groom by his Christian and surname, unless any one happened to possess some peculiarity that marked him. For instance, I remember a little man in years, grown timid from age, but otherwise supposed to be the best rider in England, and remarkable for his knowledge of almost every race-course, whose name, I think, was William Chaevers; and of whom it was the custom to speak, by calling him Old Will, The Old One, and the like. I mention this, as it may be now, or hereafter, a distinctive mark of the changes of manners. I know not what appellations are given to grooms at Newmarket at the present day, but at the time I speak of, if any grooms had been called *Misters*, my master would certainly have been among the number; and his constant appellation by everybody, except his own boys, who called him John, was simply John Watson.

With respect to me, his conduct seems to show that he understood my character better than the grooms who had judged of it before: as I did not long ride a quiet colt at the tail of the string (on whose back he soon put a new-comer), but had a dun horse, by no means a tame or safe one, committed to my care. Instead of timidity, he must have remarked various traits of courage in me, before he would have ventured on this step. In corroboration of this, I may cite the following proof. I continued to ride the dun horse through the winter. It was John Watson's general practice to exercise his horses over the flat, and up Cambridge Hill, on the west side of Newmarket: but the rule was not invariable. One wintry day he ordered us up to the Bury Hills. It mizzled a very sharp sleet, the wind became uncommonly cutting, and Dun (the horse I rode), being remarkable for a tender skin, found the wind and the sleet, which blew directly up his nostrils, so very painful, that it suddenly made him outrageous. He started from the rank in which he was walking, tried to unseat me, endeavoured to set off full speed; and when he found he could not master me so as to get head, began to rear, snorted most violently, threw out behind, plunged, and used every mischievous exertion of which the muscular powers of a blood-horse are capable. I, who felt the uneasiness he suffered before his violence began, being luckily prepared, sat firm, as steady and upright as if this had been his usual exercise. John Watson was riding beside his horses, and a groom, I believe it was old Cheevers, broke out into an exclamation—"John, that is a fine lad!"

"Aye, aye," replied Watson, highly satisfied, "you will find some time or other there are few in Newmarket that will match him." To have behaved with true courage, and to meet with applause like this, especially from John Watson, was a triumph, such as I could at this time have felt in no other way with the same sweet satisfaction. My horsemanship had been seen by all the boys—my praises had been heard by them all.

It will not be amiss here to remark that boys with straight legs, small calves, and knees that project but little, seldom be-

come excellent riders. I, on the contrary, was somewhat bow-legged, I had then the custom of turning in my toes, and my knees were protuberant. I soon learned that the safe hold for sitting steady was to keep the knee and the calf of the leg strongly pressed against the side of the animal that endeavours to unhorse you; and as little accidents afford frequent occasions to remind the boys of this rule, it becomes so rooted in the memory of the intelligent, that their danger is comparatively trifling.

Of the temperaments and habits of blood-horses there are great varieties, and those very strongly contrasted. The majority of them are playful, but their gambols are dangerous to the timid or unskilful. They are all easily and suddenly alarmed, when anything they do not understand forcibly catches their attention, and they are then to be feared by the bad horseman, and carefully guarded against by the good. Very serious accidents have happened to the best. But, besides their general disposition to playfulness, there is a great propensity in them to become what the jockeys call vicious. High bred, hot in blood, exercised, fed, and dressed so as to bring that heat to perfection, their tender skins at all times subject to a sharp curry-comb, hard brushing, and, when they take sweats, to scraping with wooden instruments, it cannot be but they are frequently and exceedingly irritated. Intending to make themselves felt and feared, they will watch their opportunity to bite, stamp, or kick; I mean those among them that are vicious. Tom, the brother of Jack Clarke, after sweating a gray horse that belonged to Lord March, with whom he lived, while he was either scraping or dressing him, was seized by the animal by the shoulder, lifted from the ground, and carried two or three hundred yards before the horse loosened his hold. Old Forester, a horse that belonged to Captain Vernon, all the while I remained at Newmarket, was obliged to be kept apart, and, being foundered, to live at grass, where he was confined to a close paddock. Except Tom Watson, a younger brother of John, he would suffer no lad to come near him: if in his paddock, he would run furiously at

the first person that approached, and if in the stable, would kick and assault every one within his reach. Horses of this kind seem always to select their favourite boy. Tom Watson, indeed, had attained to man's estate, and in his brother's absence, which was rare, acted as superintendent. Horses, commonly speaking, are of a friendly and generous nature; but there are anecdotes of the malignant and savage ferocity of some that are scarcely to be credited: at least many such are traditional at Newmarket.

Of their friendly disposition towards their keepers there is a trait known to every boy that has the care of any one of them, which ought not to be omitted. The custom is to rise very early, even between two and three in the morning, when the days lengthen. In the course of the day, horses and boys have much to do. About half after eight, perhaps, in the evening, the horse has his last feed of oats, which he generally stands to enjoy in the centre of his smooth, carefully-made bed of clean long straw, and by the side of him the weary boy will often lie down: it being held as a maxim, a rule without exception, that were he to lie even till morning, the horse would never lie down himself, but stand still, careful to do his keeper no harm. I should add, however, that the boy must keep awake, not for fear of the horse, but of the mischievous disposition of his comrades. Should sleep happen to overcome him, some lad will take one of those tough ashen plants with which they ride, and, measuring his aim, strike him with all his force, and endeavour to make the longest wear he possibly can, on the leg of the sleeper. I remember to have been so punished once, when the blow, I concluded, was given by Tom Watson, as I thought no other boy in the stable could have made so large a wear; it reached from the knee to the instep, and was of a finger's breadth.

There are few trades or professions, each of which has not a uniform mode of life peculiar to it, subject only to such slight variations as are incidental and temporary. This observation is particularly applicable to the life of a stable-boy.

All the boys in the stable rise at the same hour, from half-past two in spring, to between four and five in the depth of winter. The horses hear them when they awaken each other, and neigh, to denote their eagerness to be fed. Being dressed, the boy begins with carefully clearing out the manger, and giving a feed of oats, which he is obliged no less carefully to sift. He then proceeds to dress the litter; that is, to shake the bed on which the horse has been lying, remove whatever is wet or unclean, and keep the remaining straw in the stable for another time. The whole stables are then thoroughly swept, the few places for fresh air are kept open, the great heat of the stable gradually cooled, and the horse, having ended his first feed, is roughly cleaned and dressed. In about half-an hour after they begin, or a little better, the horses have been rubbed down, and re clothed, saddled, each turned in his stall, then bridled, mounted, and the whole string goes out to morning exercise; he that leads being the first, for each boy knows his place.

Except by accident, the race-horse never trots. He must either walk or gallop; and in exercise, even when it is the hardest, the gallop begins slowly and gradually, and increases till the horse is nearly at full speed. When he has galloped half a mile, the boy begins to push him forward, without relaxation, for another half-mile. This is at the period when the horses are in full exercise, to which they come by degrees. The boy that can best regulate these degrees among those of light weight, is generally chosen to lead the gallop; that is, he goes first out of the stable, and first returns. •

In the time of long exercise, this is the first *brushing gallop*. A brushing gallop signifies that the horses are nearly at full speed before it is over, and it is commonly made at last rather up hill. Having all pulled up, the horses stand some two or three minutes and recover their wind; they then leisurely descend the hill and take a long walk; after which they are brought to water. But in this, as in everything else (at least as soon as long exercise begins), everything to them is measured. The boy counts the number of times the horse swallows when he drinks, and allows him to take no more gulps than the

groom orders, the fewest in the hardest exercise, and one horse more or less than another, according to the judgment of the groom. After watering, a gentle gallop is taken, and after that, another walk of considerable length; to which succeeds the second and last brushing gallop, which is by far the most severe. When it is over, another pause, thoroughly to recover their wind, is allowed them, their last walk is begun, the limits of which are prescribed, and it ends in directing their ride homewards.

The morning's exercise often extends to four hours, and the evening's to much about the same time. Being once in the stable, each lad begins his labour. He leads the horse into his stall, ties him up, rubs down his legs with straw, takes off his saddle and body-clothes; curries him carefully; then, with both curry-comb and brush, never leaves him till he has thoroughly cleaned his skin, so that neither spot nor wet, nor any appearance of neglect, may be seen about him. The horse is then reclothed, and suffered to repose for some time, which is first employed in gratifying his hunger and recovering from his weariness. All this is performed, and the stables are once more shut up, about nine o'clock.

Accustomed to this life, the boys are very little overcome by fatigue, except that early in the morning they may be drowsy. I have sometimes fallen slightly asleep at the beginning of the first brushing gallop. But if they are not weary, they are hungry, and they make themselves ample amends for all they have done. Nothing perhaps can exceed the enjoyment of a stable-boy's breakfast: what, then, may not be said of mine, who had so long been used to suffer hunger, and so seldom found the means of satisfying it? Our breakfast consisted of new milk, or milk porridge, then the cold meat of the preceding day, most exquisite Gloucester cheese, fine white bread, and concluded with plentiful draughts of table-beer. All this did not overload the stomach, or in the least deprive me of my youthful activity, except that, like others, I might sometimes take a nap for an hour, after so small a portion of sleep.

For my own part, so total and striking was the change which had taken place in my situation, that I could not but feel it very sensibly. I was more conscious of it than most boys would have been, and therefore not a little satisfied. The former part of my life had most of it been spent in turmoil, and often in singular wretchedness. I had been exposed to every want, every weariness, and every occasion of despondency, except that such poor sufferers become reconciled to, and almost insensible of, suffering, and boyhood and beggary are, fortunately, not prone to despond. Happy had been the meal where I had enough; rich to me was the rag that kept me warm; and heavenly the pillow, no matter what or how hard, on which I could lay my head to sleep. Now I was warmly clothed, nay gorgeously, for I was proud of my new livery, and never suspected that there was disgrace in it; I fed voluptuously, not a prince on earth, perhaps, with half the appetite and never-failing relish; and instead of being obliged to drag through the dirt after the most sluggish, obstinate, and despised among our animals, I was mounted on the noblest that the earth contains, had him under my care, and was borne by him over hill and dale, far outstripping the wings of the wind. Was not this a change, such as might excite reflection even in the mind of a boy!

Boys, when at full liberty, and thus kept in health and exercise, are eager at play. The games most common at Newmarket were fives, spell and null, marbles, chuck-farthing, and spinning-tops, at which, as well as marbles and fives, I excelled. Another game called holes, was occasionally played by a few of the boys. This was a game of some little study, and was much delighted in by the shepherd boys and men, who tended their flocks on that vast plain (as then it was) on which Newmarket stood. Three squares were cut in the earth, one within the other, in each side of which were three holes. Each antagonist had nine warriors or bits of stick to combat the opposing nine. What the rules of the game were I have forgotten; but I believe the most essential of them was that he was the victor who could imprison his adversary's men.

or leave them no further space to move in. If the choice of the move were given, I and other good players knew how to win at this game with certainty. Till I discovered the secret, I was greatly devoted to the game.

In order to have fair play allowed me at these different games, I had my little infant labours of Hercules to perform; or, to speak more properly and plainly, to fight my way, and convince all the boys of my own age I was not to be cowed by them. All boys are wranglers; and out of this propensity the elder boys at Newmarket take pleasure in creating themselves diversion. Jack Clarke, who was about seventeen, was a very good-natured, peaceable lad: but all the others in our stable were very assiduous in exciting the little ones to quarrel, and persuading him who would have wished to remain at peace, to believe he must certainly be a coward. This stigma I was not willing to be loaded with: the consequence was that battle after battle was fought, first between me and Jack, and then between me and Tom, for two of us were so named. Jack had been a shepherd boy, was older by some months than myself, preceded me as a jockey, was a most inveterate, obstinate, and unfair antagonist—for he would bite, kick, or do anything to gain the victory,—was quite as strong as myself, and excessively hardy. However, he entirely wanted method and presence of mind, and after three or four desperate contests he was obliged fairly to own he was not my equal. Tom, who came into the service after me, was likewise older, larger-limbed, and had more strength; but my conquest of him was much more easy. He had bones, sinews, and thews, as Shakespeare says, but little heart; he was prevailed on to venture a second combat, but not a third. I had the good fortune also to face and outface those among Lord March's boys who lived opposite to us, and with whom we had continual intercourse; so that, though I was but thirteen, I became the acknowledged hero among the boys of both stables under fifteen years of age. Thus much for the footing on which I stood with my rivals within the first half-year after I came to live with John Watson. It must be remembered that all the tricks of which



Jack Clarke had warned me had been tried upon me in vain. These things, together with my aptitude at play, soon placed me as the leading boy of the young fry.

From nine o'clock in the morning till four, the whole time is at the boy's own disposal, except that of breakfasting and dining, which he is seldom apt to think ill employed. But in summer, spring, and autumn the stables are again opened at four, and woe to him who is absent! I never was but once, when, unfortunately, Captain Vernon himself happened to arrive at Newmarket. I never saw John Watson so angry with me before or afterwards; though even then, after giving me four or five strokes across the shoulders with an ashen plant, he threw it away in disgust, and exclaimed as he turned from me, — "On such a day!"

The business to be done in the afternoon is but a repetition, with little or no variety, of that which I have described for the morning, except that they return to stables at seven, or rather earlier, again dress their horses, give them a first feed, go to supper themselves, give a second feed, prepare the horses' beds, pick and prepare the hay with which they sup, and by nine o'clock the stables are once more shut up, containing both horses and boys.

The time I remained at Newmarket was upwards of two years and a half, during which many things occurred worthy of remembrance, and though in their nature dissimilar, yet all tending to have that influence on character by which, if my poor philosophy holds good, character is progressively formed: Instead of relating these different accidents as they occurred, I shall rather endeavour to collect them into classes, beginning with those that immediately belong to the business of a jockey.

I have already remarked how necessary it is for the best horseman never to be off his guard. At the time the little accident I am going to relate happened, and which I could not but then consider as rather disgraceful, I was so persuaded of being always on the alert, and of my power of instantaneously recovering my seat, that I supposed what followed to be nearly.

an impossibility. The horse that I then rode happened to be unwell, and did not take his morning and evening exercise with the others. I was, therefore, ordered to walk him out a couple of hours in the middle of the day, to canter him gently, give him a certain quantity of water, and canter and walk him home again. The horse was by no means apt to start or play tricks of an uncommon kind: he was, besides, unwell, and dull in spirits, and I was more than usually unsuspicious of accident. After a walk and a very gentle gallop, I brought him to water. Our watering troughs stood by a pump under the Devil's Ditch, on the side next to Newmarket. Not foreseeing any possible danger, I held the reins quite slack, and did not sit upright in my seat, but rested on one thigh; when suddenly, without any warning, a gray rook, of the species common to that plain, ascended, on the wing, up the ditch within half a yard of the ground, and in a direction that would scarcely have missed the horse's head. At this sudden apparition, an arrow from a bow could hardly exceed the velocity with which he darted round to avoid his enemy; and the impulse was so unforeseen, and so irresistible, that I, and my whole stock of self-confidence and self-conceit, lay humbled in the dust. I was greatly afraid lest my disgrace should be witnessed by anyone, and particularly that the horse should make for home: however, his fright ceasing, and his health not disposing him to be wanton, he easily suffered himself to be caught and mounted, and my honour received no stain.

I felt this accident the more, because I was at this very time receiving new marks of confidence in my talents. A horse bred in Ireland had been brought into our train; John Watson did not think proper to let a boy of heavy weight back him, and among those of light weight, I was the only one in whom he durst confide. It was for this horse that I quitted the dun horse, on whose back I had obtained such praise, and upon him the other boy of the name of Tom was mounted, but only for two or three mornings. Dun immediately discovered he was Tom's master, and would not keep up in the gallop, but would go what pace he pleased. If struck, he began to

plunge, kick, and rear; threw his rider, and made all the boys laugh and hoot at him, and thoroughly exposed him to mortification.

I was frequently obliged to change my horse, but it was always for one more difficult to manage; and not only so; but I generally preserved an honour that had been early conferred on me, that of leading the gallop, let me ride what horse I would. At one of these changes I was transferred to the back of a little mare, which had long been ridden by Jack Clarke, who was wanted for a horse of more power, but of less spirit. On her, too, I led the gallop. She was not so much vicious as full of play. Whenever I pleased, when the gallop was begun, by a turn of the arm and a pretended flourish I could make her start out of the line, clap her head between her legs, fling her hind heels in the air, and begin to cut capers. This excitement was generally sufficient for the whole string, who would start off one after another, each playing his gambols, and perhaps one or two of them throwing their riders. Under such a temptation for triumph, I was perhaps as prudent as could be expected from a boy of my age; but when John Watson did not happen to be with us, I could not always resist the vanity of showing that I was equal to the best of them, and quite before the majority. When John was absent, the bad riders would sometimes, before I began the gallop, very humbly entreat me not to play them any tricks; and when they did, I was good-natured enough to comply.

In every stud of horses there are frequent changes, and as their qualities are discovered, one horse is rejected, and a colt, or perhaps a stranger, bought and admitted. It happened, on such an occasion, that a little horse was brought us from another stud, whence he had been rejected for being unmanageable. He had shown himself restive, and, besides the snaffle, was ridden in a check-rein. I was immediately placed on his back, and, what seemed rather more extraordinary, ordered to lead the gallop, as usual. I do not know how it happened, but under me he showed very little disposition to be refractory, and whenever the humour occurred, it was soon overcome;

that he was, however, watchful for an opportunity to do mischief, the following incident will discover. Our time for hard exercise had begun perhaps a fortnight or three weeks. As that proceeds, the boys are less cautious, each having less suspicion of his horse. I was leading the gallop one morning, and had gone more than half the way towards the foot of Cambridge Hill, when something induced me to call and speak to a boy behind me; for which purpose I rather unseated myself, and as I looked back, rested on my left thigh. The arch traitor no sooner felt the precarious seat I had taken, than he suddenly plunged from the path, had his head between his legs, his heels in the air, and exerting all his power of bodily contortion, flung me from the saddle with only one foot in the stirrup, and both my legs on the off side. I immediately heard the whole set of boys behind shouting triumphantly, "A calf, a calf!" a phrase of contempt for a boy that is thrown. Though the horse was then in the midst of his wild antics, and increasing his pace to full speed, as far as the tricks he was playing would permit, still, finding I had a foot in the stirrup, I replied to their shouts by a whisper to myself, "It is no calf yet". The horse took the usual course, turned up Cambridge Hill, and now rather increased his speed than his mischievous tricks. This opportunity I took with that rashness of spirit which is peculiar to boys; and, notwithstanding the prodigious speed and irregular motion of the horse, threw my left leg over the saddle. It was with the utmost difficulty I could preserve my balance, but I did, though by this effort I lost hold of the reins, both my feet were out of the stirrups, and the horse for a moment was entirely his own master. But my grand object was gained: I was once more firmly seated, the reins and the stirrups were recovered. In a twinkling, the horse, instead of being pulled up, was urged to his utmost speed; and when he came to the end of the gallop, he stopped of himself with a very good will, as he was heartily breathed. The short exclamations of the boys at having witnessed what they thought an impossibility, were the gratification I received, and the greatest, perhaps, that could be bestowed.

I once saw an instance of what may be called the grandeur of alarm in a horse. In winter, during short exercise, I was returning one evening on the back of a hunter, that was put in training for the Hunters' plate. There had been some little rain, and the channel, always dry in summer, was then a small brook. As I must have rubbed his legs dry if wetted, I gave him the rein, and made him leap the brook, which he understood as a challenge for play, and beginning to gambol, after a few antics he reared very high, and, plunging forward with great force, alighted with his fore-feet on the edge of a deep gravel-pit half-filled with water, so near that a very few inches further he must have gone headlong down. His first astonishment and fear were so great, that he stood for some time breathless and motionless: then gradually recollecting himself, his back became curved, his ears erect, his hind and fore leg in a position for sudden retreat; his nostrils from an inward snort burst into one loud expression of horror; and rearing on his hind-legs, he turned short round, expressing all the terrors he had felt by the utmost violence of plunging, kicking, and other bodily exertions. I was not quite so much frightened as he had been, but I was heartily glad, when he became quiet again, that the accident had been no worse. The only misfortune I had was the loss of my cap, and being obliged to ride back some way in order to recover it.

Among the disagreeable, and in some degree dangerous, accidents that happened to me, was the following. We had an old gray blood gelding touched in his wind, called Puff, on which John Watson generally used to ride. He had some vicious tricks, and the thing that made him dangerous was, that, in the jockey's phrase, he had lost his mouth, that is, the bit could make no impression on him, and he could run away with the strongest rider; but the whim did not often take him. The watering-troughs were filled once a day, and as they were about a mile and a half distant, each lad performed that duty in turns, being obliged to walk for that purpose to the Devil's Ditch and back. One day, when it was my turn, old Puff being in the stable, John Watson allowed me to shorten my

task by a ride, of which I was very glad, and Puff was soon brought out. For the office of filling the troughs it was necessary to take a pail, and accordingly I flung one with the rim over my right shoulder, and under my left arm, as was the way with us when we walked. I then mounted, but had not gone far, before I found Mr. Puff was determined on one of his frolics. He set off at a good round gallop. This I should not have regarded in the least, had it not been for the pail at my back. But he was a tall horse, the ruts before the race-course began were numerous, rough, and often narrow, and he amused himself with crossing them; so that the rim of the pail was very disagreeable, and now and then hurt my back severely. I foresaw, however, that my only remedy was to tire him out at his own diversion. As soon, therefore, as I had an opportunity, I turned him upon the turf, by which I avoided the worst jolts of the pail; and, instead of struggling with him, I gave him head, hurried him forward, as fast as he could go, passed along the side called the flat, turned in beside the Devil's Ditch, forebore to push him when we came to the watering-trough, but found the obstinate old devil was resolved not to stop. I then took him full gallop up Cambridge Hill, and into Neymarket, supposing his own home would satisfy him. But no! away he went into the town, while some boys belonging to other stables exclaimed, "Here is old Puff running away with Watson's Tom". At a certain distance down the main street was a street on the left, by which, making a little circle, I might again bring his head homewards, and that road I prevailed on him to take; but as he was not easily guided, he thought proper to gallop on the causeway, till he came to a post which bent inwards towards the wall, so much that it was doubtful whether his body would pass. He stopped short at a single step, but luckily I had foreseen this, or I should certainly have been pitched over his neck, and probably my back would have been broken, had I not employed both hands with all my force to counteract the shock. Having measured the distance with his eye, he saw he could pass, which to me was a new danger; my legs would one

or both of them have wanted room, but with the same juvenile activity I raised them on the withers, and away again we went, mutually escaping unhurt. By this time, however, my gentleman was wearied; in two minutes we were at home, and there he thought proper once more to stop. The worst of it, however, was, that I had still to water my troughs.

I shall conclude this chapter with a fact which may deserve the attention of the philosopher, as an instance of deep feeling, great sagacity, and almost unconquerable ambition among horses; and which goes nearly to prove, that they themselves understand why they contend with each other. I have mentioned a vicious horse, of the name of Forester, that would obey no boy but Tom Watson: he was about ten or eleven years old, and had been a horse of some repute, but unfortunately his feet foundered, for the cure of which he was suffered to remain a great part of his time at grass. However, when I had been about a year and a half at Newmarket, Captain Vernon thought proper to match him against Elephant, a horse belonging to Sir Jennison Shaftoe, whom, by the by, I saw ride this famous match. Forester, therefore, had been taken up, and kept in training a sufficient time to qualify him to run this match; but it was evident that his legs and feet were far from being in that sound state which such an exertion required, so that we concluded he must be beaten, for the reputation of Elephant arose out of his power rather than his speed. Either I mistake, or the match was a four-mile heat over the straight course; and the abilities of Forester were such, that he passed the flat, and ascended the hill as far as the distance post, nose to nose with Elephant; so that John Watson, who rode him, began to conceive hopes. Between this and the chair, Elephant, in consequence of hard whipping, got some little way before him, while Forester exerted every possible power to recover at least his lost equality; till finding all his efforts ineffectual, he made one sudden spring, and caught Elephant by the under-jaw, which he gripped so violently as to hold him back; nor was it without the utmost difficulty that he could be forced to quit his hold. Poor Forester, he lost;

but he lost most honourably! Every experienced groom, we were told, thought it a most extraordinary circumstance. John Watson declared he had never in his life been more surprised by the behaviour of a horse.

The feature in my character which was to distinguish it at a later period of life, namely, some few pretensions to literary acquirement, has appeared for a time to have lain dormant. After I left Berkshire, circumstances had been so little favourable to me, that, except the mighty volume of Sacred Writ (which I always continued more or less to peruse, whenever I found a Bible) and the two small remnants of romance I have mentioned, letters seemed to have lost sight of me, and I of letters. Books were not then, as they fortunately are now, great or small, on this subject or on that, to be found in almost every house: a book, except of prayers, or of daily religious use, was scarcely to be seen but among the opulent, or in the possession of the studious; and by the opulent they were often disregarded with a degree of neglect which would now be almost disgraceful. Yet in the course of six or seven years, it can hardly be imagined that not a single book fell in my way; or that, if it did, I should not eagerly employ such opportunity as I had to know its contents. Even the walls of cottages and little ale-houses would do something; for many of them had old English ballads, such as "Death and the Lady," and "Margaret's Ghost," with lamentable tragedies, or King Charles's golden rules, occasionally pasted on them. These were at that time the learning, and often, no doubt, the delight of the vulgar. However, I may venture to affirm, that during the period we have passed, I neither had in my possession, nor met with any book of any kind which I had leisure and permission to read through. During my residence at Newmarket, I was not quite so much in the desert, though, as far as my limits extended I was little removed; a tolerable estimate of the boundary may be formed from the remaining chapters of this book.

Whether I had or had not begun to scrawl and imitate



writing, or whether I was able to convey written intelligence concerning myself to my father for some months after I left him, I cannot say, but we were very careful not to lose sight of each other; and following his affection, as well as his love of change, in about half a year he came to Newmarket himself, where he at first procured work of the most ordinary kind at his trade. There was one among his shopmates whom I well remember, for he was struck with me, and I with him; he not only made shoes, but was a cock-feeder of some estimation; and what was to me much more interesting, he had read so much as to have made himself acquainted with the most popular English authors of that day. He even lent me books to read; among which were *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Spectator*, both of which could not but be to me of the highest importance. I remember after I had read them, he asked me to consider and tell him which I liked best: I immediately replied, "There was no need of consideration; I liked *Gulliver's Travels* ten times the best." "Aye," said he, "I would have laid my life on it; boys and young people always prefer the marvellous to the true." I acquiesced in his judgment, which, however, only proved that neither he nor I understood *Gulliver*, though it afforded me infinite delight. The behaviour, of my father, who, being at work, was present at this, and two or three other dialogues in which there was a kind of literary pretension, denoted the pride and exultation of his heart. He remarked, "that many such boys as Tom were not to be found! It was odd enough! He knew not where Tom had picked it up, he had never had a brain for such things; but God gave some gifts to some, and others to others, seeing He was very bountiful; but, if he guessed rightly, He had given Tom his share!" My father was not a little flattered to find that the cock-feeder was inclined to concur with him in opinion. I remember little else of my literary cock-feeder; yet the advantages I had gained from him in letting me know there were books like these, and introducing me, though but to a momentary view of Swift and Addison, were perhaps incalculable.

That love of the marvellous which is natural to ill-informed man, is still more lively in childhood. I used to listen with the greatest pleasure to a tale of providential interference; my blood thrilled through my frame at a story of an angel alighting in a field, walking up to a worthy clergyman, telling him a secret known only to himself, and then persuading him to change his road, by which he avoided the murderers that were lying in wait for him. Yet I know not how it happened, but even at this time I refused to believe in witches; and when stories of hobgoblins, of houses that were haunted, or of nightly apparitions were repeated, I remained incredulous. I had either invented or heard some of the plain arguments which showed the absurdity of such opinions. It will be seen in the following chapter, that my incredulity in this respect was of use to me, though I cannot account for the manner in which I came by it at so early an age.

Books of piety, if the author were but inspired with zeal, fixed my attention whenever I met with them: *The Whole Duty of Man* was my favourite study, and still more Horneck's *Crucified Jesus*. I had not yet arrived at Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, or *The Life of Francis Spira*; but John Bunyan I ranked among the most divine authors I had ever read. In fact I was truly well-intentioned, but my zeal was too ardent, and liable to become dangerous.

One day as I happened to be passing the church I heard voices singing, which exercise I admired; and having, as I thought, a tuneful voice, I was desirous of becoming acquainted with so pleasing an art. I approached the church door, found it open, and went in, when I found my ear charmed with some heavenly addition to the sweet melody of music; and on inquiry was told they were singing in four parts. At the head of them was a Mr. Langham, who could sing in a feigned soprano's voice, and who was their instructor in music; for they were all acknowledged learners except himself, and each of them paid him five shillings a quarter for his trouble in teaching them. Having stood with delight to listen some time, a conversation at length began; I was invited to try my

voice, and after a ready compliance, both my voice and ear were pronounced to be good. Thus encouraged, I ventured to ask if I might come among them; and was answered, "yes; they should be very glad to have me, for they much wanted a treble voice, and all they required was that I should conform to the rules of the society. I inquired what those rules were, and was told they each paid five shillings entrance, and five shillings a quarter to Mr. Langham, another five shillings for Arnold's *Psalmody*; and that they paid forfeits of pennies and twopences if they were absent on certain days, at certain hours, or infringed other necessary by-laws. An expense so great alarmed me: I would willingly have complied with their forfeits, because I depended on my own punctuality; but fifteen shillings was a vast sum, and I told them what it was that made me hesitate. As they were desirous to have me, they agreed that I should sing out of their books; and Langham, who had great good-nature, said, since I was but a boy, and my wages could not be great, he would give up the entrance money. It was therefore agreed, that with the payment of five shillings a quarter to Mr. Langham, I should be instructed by him in the art of psalmody.

From the little I that day learned, and from another lesson or two, I obtained a tolerable conception of striking intervals upwards or downwards; such as the third, the fourth, and the remainder of the octave, the chief feature in which I soon understood, but of course I found most difficulty in the third, sixth, and seventh. Previously, however, to any great progress, I was obliged to purchase Arnold's *Psalmody*; and studious over this divine treasure, I passed many a forenoon extended in the hayloft. My chief, and almost my only, difficulty, lay in the impenetrable obscurity of such technical words as were not explained either by their own nature, or by the author in other language. I was illiterate; I knew the language of the vulgar well, but little more. Perhaps no words ever puzzled poor mortal more than I was puzzled by the words *major* and *minor keys*. I think it a duty, which no one who writes an elementary book ought to neglect, to give a

vocabulary of all the words which are not in common use, in the language in which he writes; and to explain them by the simplest terms in that language; or if that cannot be done, by a clear and easy paraphrase. The hours I spent by myself in mastering whatever belonged to notation, and in learning the intervals, occasioned my progress to be so very different from that of the others, that it excited the admiration of them all; and Mr. Langham, the great man whom I then looked up to, declared it was surprising. If any part was out, I heard it immediately, and often struck the note for them, getting the start of Mr. Langham. If he should happen to be absent, he said that I could set them all right; so that by this, and the clearness of my voice, I obtained the nickname of the sweet singer of Israel.

My quickness at whatever related to reading became so far known, that a man about fifty, who had many years kept a school in Newmarket, made me the offer, if I would become his scholar, to teach me gratis. Thoroughly glad of the opportunity, I thanked him kindly, and instantly complied. The next morning I went to his school, where I saw a number of boys, to whom I was introduced by the master, as one whom they ought to respect. "I'll set him a word of six syllables," said he, "and I'll engage for him that he shall spell it instantly without the least mistake, or without ever perhaps having seen it before. Pray, my boy," said he, "how do you spell Mahershalalhashbaz?" The boys first stared at a word of so foreign a sound, and next at the immediate readiness with which I spelled it, though it would be difficult to find a word that could puzzle less: however, since they all wondered at me, it was very natural I should wonder at myself, and that I did most assuredly. The master showed me the first seat as an honour to his school, where he assured me I might remain as long as he could teach me anything, and he had by no means the character of ignorance. But, poor gentleman, he had another failing, which I could still less pardon; for every afternoon he was to be seen drunk in the streets, and that to such an offensive and shameful degree, that though I was very

desirous to gain some little addition to my stock of knowledge, I felt myself so disgraced by my master that I went but three times to his school.

This plan, however, suggested another. By trade, Mr. Langham was a maker of leather breeches, which were worn through all Newmarket: but he had by some means acquired rather a greater love of knowledge, and more of it than at that period belonged to his station; for I believe he was only a journeyman. Hearing me bewail the opportunity I had lost, and especially that of acquiring the first rudiments of arithmetic, he joined in my regret, saying it was a pity he could not afford to teach me himself for nothing, and that I could not spare another five shilling a quarter out of my wages; otherwise he would have given me one lesson daily between stable-hours. To this proposal, after turning it in my mind, I however agreed. I continued with him three months, and in that time mastered rule after rule so well, as to understand Practice and the Rule of Three. Except what I have already related, these three months, as far as others were concerned, may be truly called my course of education. At the age of two and three and thirty, indeed, when I was endeavouring to acquire the French language, I paid a Monsieur Raymond twenty shillings for a few lessons, but the good he did me was so little that it was money thrown away. At Newmarket I was so intent on studying arithmetic, that, for want of better apparatus, I have often got an old nail, and cast up sums on the paling of the stable-yard. The boys prophesied I should go mad; in which sagacious conjecture our old maid and house-keeper, for she was both, joined them.

While my music and my arithmetic were thus in some sort confusing my brain, I became not only ashamed of, but alarmed at myself; for being occasionally sent on errands, I found my memory absent, and made several blunders, a thing to which I had been wholly unaccustomed. One day, when John Watson was at home, I was sent only for two things, and forgot one of them, at which I heard him exclaim, without any reproach—

"God bless me, what is come to the boy!" This startled me a little. As, however, I remember nothing more of the paroxysm, it could not have lasted very long.

My father did not continue long at his trade, and was obliged to seek some other mode of subsistence. For some months, during the middle part of the time that I remained as a stable-boy, he had the office at an inn of fetching and carrying the Royston mail; and being afterwards tired of this, he quitted Newmarket for London, leaving me once more with much good advice, and no small degree of regret. I loved my father, and knew his intentions were honest; but almost from infancy, I was aware they were not wise.

I suppose that that property of the mind, which creates certain indistinct forms and imaginary lines in the clear and visible appearances of things, is common to every person of a lively and active fancy, for I have it still; and now that I am old, much more in sickness than in health. I recollect an instance of this, which occurred about the time I am speaking of. The cowardly boys made bargains with each other to go in pairs, when their business called them to different parts of the yard and outhouses after it was dark: I determined always to go by myself. One evening, intending to fetch some hay from a hayloft, as I was mounting the ladder an object presented itself that instantly stopped me. It was a clear moonlight night, and I beheld the perfect face of a man extended on the hay. He must be a stranger, and might be a robber, or person of evil intentions. I had no idea of a ghost; and though alarmed, I reasoned on probabilities. The more I looked, the more thoroughly I was convinced I saw a real face. Still I continued to reason. I was halfway up the ladder. If I returned, I must either fabricate a falsehood, or openly declare why, and this would have been cause of triumph to those whose actions betrayed their fears, and of the greater disgrace to me for having assumed a superiority. The man might be a beggar, who had only obtained entrance by some means that he might rest comfortably: and, even if his designs were wicked, they could not be against me, for I

had little to lose: so that at last I determined to proceed. As I have said, the light of the moon was bright: it shone into the loft through the holes and crevices of a side hanging door; and I had mounted three steps higher before the vision totally disappeared, and was replaced by the rude and unmeaning lines of reality. No man was there, consequently no man's face could be seen. This incident was a wholesome lesson: it taught me to think much on the facility with which the senses are deceived, and the folly with which they entertain fear.

The boys who had paired off as mutual protectors to each other had left my namesake Tom, being the odd one, without a mate: and, as he was much more remarkable for his cowardice than his valour, the best expedient he could think of was to offer me a halfpenny a night if I would go with him in the dark to get his hay. I believe nothing could have made him stir from the fireside on a winter night, but the fear of neglecting his stable duties; which fear to all of us had something in it that was almost sacred. We had at this time in the stables a very beautiful male tabby cat, as remarkable for his familiarity with the horses and boys, as for his fine colours, symmetry, and strength. He would go through the stable night by night, and place himself on the withers, first of this horse, then of the next, and there familiarly take his sleep, till he had made the whole round. The boys had taught him several tricks, which he very willingly repeated as often as they gave the signal, without taking offence at the rogueries they occasionally practised upon him; so that he was a general favourite with everyone, from John Watson even to old Betty. One evening, as I was going with Tom to get his hay, and we approached the stable in which it happened there ~~was~~ to be kept, Tom leading the road (for cowards are always desirous to convince themselves they are really valiant), a very sudden, vehement, and discordant noise was heard, to listen to which Tom's valour was wholly unequal. Flying from the stable, he was at the back-door of the house in a twinkling. I was paid for my courage: pride and curiosity concurred to make me show it,

and I remained firm at my post. I stood still, while the noise at intervals was several times repeated. It was the beginning of winter, and at one end of the stable a certain quantity of autumn wheat was stowed. I recollected this circumstance; and after considering some time at length the truth struck me, and I called, "Come along, Tom, it is the cat and the rats fighting; but they will leave off when they hear us come into the stable." We had neither candle nor lanthorn. It was a maxim with John Watson to trust no such things with boys, whose nightly duty it was to fetch trusses of straw and armfuls of hay; but I entered the stable, gave Tom his hay, loaded myself with my own, and confident in the valour of our favourite cat, said to him—"We shall find a rare number of dead rats to-morrow, Tom." I knew not the power of numbers, nor the imbecility of an individual so exposed. The next morning we found our hero lying dead in the stable, with only three dead rats beside him. What the number of the wounded was, must remain a secret to posterity: though of the value of this and other secrets of the same kind, I have often entertained my doubts.

John Watson remained a bachelor, and old Betty was the only female, at least that I can recollect, in the family: she was very ignorant, and very angry when boys durst contend with her age and experience; but we did not greatly respect her anger. She was so strenuous an advocate for goblins, apparitions, and especially witchcraft, that she did not in the least scruple to affirm things the most extravagant. One of her positions was, that unthinking old women, with less courage and sagacity than herself, were taken by surprise, and made witches against their will. Imps of the devil came slyly upon them, ran up their clothes, caught some part of the breast in their mouths, and made a teat for themselves. She provoked me very much, yet I could not help laughing; while she, to prove the truth of what she said, affirmed she had seen them peeping out more than once; and that on a certain night two of them made a desperate attempt on her, which she could no otherwise defeat than by taking up first one, and then the



other, with the tengs, and throwing them both into the red-hot part of the kitchen fire.

Stories like these are almost too ludicrous to be mentioned, but the one I am going to relate was at that time to me as tragical as anything that could happen to an individual.

Jack Clarke, now about eighteen, was spending his evening before nine o'clock in his good-natured way among the boys of Lord March, who lived opposite. One of them (I forget his name) took down a fowling-piece that was hanging over the kitchen chimney, and playing that trick which has been so repeatedly, and in my opinion so strangely played, said, "Now, Jack, I'll shoot you." As he spoke he pulled the trigger, and the distance between being short, Clarke was shot on the left side of his face, the middle half of which immediately became as frightful a wound as perhaps was ever beheld. The lads of both stables were there instantly: the grooms came the moment they could be found, and the terror and distress of the scene were very great, for everybody felt kindness for Jack Clarke. Tom Watson was despatched on horseback to Cambridge in search of all the surgical and medical aid that could be obtained; and such was his speed, that the surgeon, the doctor, and himself, were back by midnight, and the medical men busy in probing, inquiring, and consulting, while poor Clarke lay groaning, extended on the bed of John Watson. The left cheek-bone, eye, and other parts, were shattered past hope: the case was thought precarious, there was a bare possibility that the patient, miserable as he was, and shocking to look at, might survive.

When the physician and surgeon had done all they could by dressing and giving orders, John Watson took them under his care for the night. Whether he found beds and entertainment for them at an inn, or at the house of a friend, I know not; but as I saw him no more, I suppose he remained with them to keep them company, for such scenes do not immediately dispose the mind to sleep. Among ourselves at home, however, a very serious question arose, no less than that of who should sit up and watch with him all night? His sufferings

were so incessant, his groans so terrifying, and the wounds (by which the inside of the head was made visible) had been so bloody, raw, and torn, being at the same time most frightfully spread all round with gunpowder, and black and red spots, that every person present frankly owned they durst not stay alone all night with him in the same chamber. When it was proposed to old Betty, she was in an agony. All the older boys expressed the terror it would give them—some sleep must be had, and it being winter, the stables were to open before four. What, therefore, could be done? I own I was almost like the rest, but I most truly pitied poor Jack Clarke. I had always felt a kindness for him, and to see him forsaken at so distressing a moment, left by himself in such a wretched state, no one able to foresee what he might want, overcame me, and I said, "Well, since nobody else will, I must!" Besides, by an action so bold, performed by a boy at my age, I gained an undeniable superiority, of which any one of the elder boys would have been proud.

The medical men remained at Newmarket, or went and came as their business required, while Jack Clarke continued under their hands. I was truly anxious for his cure, though from what I had seen on the first night, and from my ignorance in surgery, I had supposed such a thing impossible. I was therefore surprised that he should seem at first to linger on, that afterwards the wounds should fill up and assume a less frightful appearance, and that at length a perfect cure should be effected. It was certainly thought to do great honour to Cambridge. The left eye was lost, the appearance of the bones was disfigured, and the deep stain of the gunpowder remained. But before I came away appearances varied, the marks of the gunpowder became less, and when I left Newmarket, Jack Clarke had long been restored to the stables, where he continued to live, apparently in good health.

During these events and accidents, the trifling studies I might be said to have, were, as far as I had the means, pursued. That is, whenever I could procure a book I did not

fail to read it; I took pains to repeat, that I might well understand, my rules in arithmetic; and as for music, Arnold was studied with increasing ardour. But the instructions of Arnold were only vocal: nay, they had a stricter limitation, they were confined to psalmody. Had I possessed any instrument, had I begun to practise, and had the means of obtaining a livelihood suggested themselves in this way, music would, most probably, have been my profession.

Moral remarks do not escape the notice of boys whose minds are active, nor the moral consequences of things, so much, perhaps, as is supposed. They now and then discover how much they are themselves affected by them; and therefore are not only led to reconsider their own, but begin to ruminate on some of the practices of mankind. For myself, I looked up with delight to angelic purity, and with awful reverence to the sublime attributes of the Godhead. The first I considered as scarcely beyond the attainment of man; the second I considered it as the grand reward of saints and angels to be allowed to comprehend. Towards the future attainment of any such angelic perfection I could not discover the least tendency in the manners of Newmarket, or the practices of the people around me. When left to themselves, petty vulgar vices, such as their means could afford, were common among them; and at the grand periodical meetings of the place, I heard of nothing but cards, dice, cock-fighting, and gambling to an enormous amount.

One anecdote which John Watson, who was no babbler, told his brother Tom, and which Tom was eager enough to repeat, struck me for its singularity and grandeur, as it appeared to me, who then knew nothing of vast money speculations, and who know but little at present. In addition to matches, plates, and other modes of adventure, that of a sweepstakes had come into vogue; and the opportunity it gave to deep calculators to secure themselves from loss by *hedging* their bets, greatly multiplied the bettors, and gave uncommon animation to the sweepstakes mode. In one of these, Captain Vernon had entered a colt or filly, and as the prize to be obtained was

great, the whole stable was on the alert. It was prophesied that the race would be a severe one; for, though the horses had none of them run before, they were all of the highest breed, that is, their sires and dams were in the first lists of fame. As was foreseen, the contest was indeed a severe one, for it could not be decided—it was a dead heat;—but our colt was by no means among the first. Yet so adroit was Captain Vernon in hedging his bets, that if one of the two colts that made it a dead heat had beaten, our master would, on that occasion, have won ten thousand pounds; as it was, he lost nothing, nor would in any case have lost anything. In the language of the turf, he stood ten thousand pounds to nothing.

A fact, so extraordinary to ignorance, and so splendid to poverty, could not pass through a mind like mine without making a strong impression, which the tales told by the boys of the sudden rise of gamblers, their reverses, desperate fortunes, empty pockets at night, and hats full of guineas in the morning, only tended to increase. With my companions I repeated, *Never venture, never win*; and in this state of puerile avarice I made bets to the amount of more than half my year's wages, the very next day, on the race-ground, all to be decided within the week. Concerning the event, however, when it was too late, my mind began to misgive me. By each match, on which I had a venture, my fears were increased; for I generally found myself on the wrong side. My crowns and half-crowns were dwindling away; yet in the midst of my despair I looked with some degree of surprise at myself, and said, "How can these boys, with whom I betted, who are so very ignorant, and over whom, even on the turf or in the stable, I feel my own superiority, have so much more cunning in laying bets than I have?"

Like many of the tragical farces of life, this hastily-formed scheme of mine was without a basis, formed on confused suppositions, and ending in total disappointment; for at the end of the week, the loss I had sustained was somewhat either over or under a guinea and a half. To me, who never before had ventured to bet sixpence, who now well remembered that all the good books I had read held gambling in abhorrence; and

who recollected, with unspeakable anguish, that the sin and folly must be told to my father; that, face to face, I must avow what I had done (for how else could I account for the expenditure of money for which I could find no equivalent?)—to me, I say, these were excruciating thoughts, as will be proved by the desperate remedy I attempted. Well was it for me that the races were over, or my little purse would have been wholly emptied. As it was not therefore possible for me to recover my loss in this way, I began to consider whether there was no other, and despair at length suggested another; a wild one, it is true, but no one could deny its possibility. The race week was just over; thousands of pounds had been betted; guineas and purses had passed in multitudes from hand to hand, and pocket to pocket, over a vast area, extending from the chair to the Devil's Ditch, and spreading to I know not what width: might not some stray guinea, nay, perhaps some weighty purse, be now lying there for the first fortunate comer? Or rather, was it not a thing exceedingly likely? I could not suppose the seeds of this golden fruit to be sown exceedingly thick, or that it would not require a long search; but I must not spare my labour: such good luck might befall me, and so eager was my mind to rid itself of its present anguish, that I was willing to believe I should be successful.

The next morning the horses were no sooner dressed and fed, and the stables cleaned, than I hurried to execute my design. I began it by a most careful examination of the betting chair, round which I slowly walked a number of times, and finding nothing below, mounted, examined its crevices, and after often attempting to go, and as often lingering by some faint endeavour to renew hope, could not quit at last, but with painful reluctance. Where should I seek next? The whole heath was before me; but which was the lucky spot? Groups of horsemen had assembled here and there: but to find each individual place? Oh that I had marks by which to discover! Thus with my eyes fixed on the ground, wandering eagerly in every direction, I slowly paced the ground, wholly intent on the perplexing thoughts and fruitless pursuits, till increasing

disappointment, and inquiry into the time of day, sent me back. This experiment of money-finding on Newmarket heath might be thought sufficient, but no! I had an hour in the evening: it was a fine moonlight night, and, dejected as I was, I resolved again to try, and forth I went, but it was indeed on the forlorn hope. The incident, however, forcibly paints the nature of my feelings. I could not endure to confess to my father both my guilt, and evident inferiority in cunning to other boys: and to fabricate a lie was perhaps equally painful. All that remained was to put off the evil day, and come to my account as late as might be. What I mean will be better understood when it is known I had determined to leave Newmarket and return to my father, not, however, without having first consulted him, and gained his approbation. My mind having its own somewhat peculiar bias, circumstances had rather occurred to disgust me, than to invite my stay. I despised my companions for the grossness of their ideas, and the total absence of every pursuit in which the mind appeared to have any share. It was even with sneers of contempt that they saw me intent on acquiring some small portion of knowledge: so that I was far from having any prompter, either as a friend or a rival. As far as I was concerned with horses, I was pleased; but I saw scarcely a biped, John Watson excepted, in whom I could find anything to admire.

Having taken my resolution, I had to summon up my courage to give John Watson warning; not that I in the least suspected he would say anything more than "Very well": but he had been a kind master, had relieved me in the day of my distress, had never imputed faults to me of which I was not guilty, had fairly waited to give my faculties time to show themselves, and had rewarded them with no common degree of praise when accident brought them to light. It was, therefore, painful to leave such a master. With my cap off, and unusual awkwardness in my manner, I went up to him, and he, perceiving I was embarrassed yet had something to say, began thus: "Well, Tom, what is the matter now?" "Oh,

sir, nothing much is the matter; only I had just a word to say." "Well, well, don't stand about it; let me hear." "Nay, sir, it is a trifle; I only came to tell you, I think of going to London." "To London?" "Yes, sir, if you please." "When do you mean to go to London?" "When my year is up, sir." "To London! What the plague has put that whim into your head?" "I believe you know my father is in London." "Well, what of that?" "We have written together, so it is resolved on." "Have you got a place?" "I don't want one, sir, I could not have a better than I have." "And what are you to do?" "I can't tell that yet, but I think of being a shoemaker." "Pshaw, you are a blockhead, and your father is a foolish man." "He loves me very dearly, sir; and I love and honour him." "Yes, yes, I believe you are a good boy; but I tell you, you are both doing a very foolish thing. Stay at Newmarket, and I will be bound for it you will make your fortune." "I would rather go back to my father, sir, if you please." "Nay, then, pray take your own way!" So saying, he turned from me with very visible chagrin, at which I felt some surprise; for I did not imagine it would give him the least concern should any one lad in the stables quit his service.

Spring and summer kept passing away: Arnold continued to afford me difficulties which I continued to overcome: my good-tempered, pleasant friend (for so he was), the breeches maker, and I, used often to consult together: and his surprise that I should so soon have gone beyond him, with respect to the theory of music, not a little flattered me. The honest psalm-singers were told I was about to leave them, and owned they were sorry to hear it, I gave them so much assistance. In short, such friends as a poor boy of fifteen, wholly unrelated in the town, could have, all expressed a degree of regret at parting: my stable companions were the only persons who expressed no emotion one way or the other. I must here, however, except poor Jack Clarke, who, as he was the first that introduced me to Newmarket, so he was the last of whom I took leave.

*[The end of Holcroft's narrative.]*

## WILLIAM GIFFORD.

[This critic, better known than loved in the days when he had risen to be editor of the *Quarterly Review*, is another of the men who have acquired learning and position under most unfavourable circumstances. Thanks to kind patrons, he was able to show his scholarly ability, while still young, by publishing a translation of *Juvenal*, to which was prefixed the following account of his unpromising boyhood.]

I know but little of my family, and that little is not very precise. My great-grandfather (the most remote of it that I ever recollect to have heard mentioned) possessed considerable property at Halsbury, a parish in the neighbourhood of Ashburton, but whether acquired or inherited, I never thought of asking, and do not know.

He was probably a native of Devonshire, for there he spent the last years of his life; spent them, too, in some sort of consideration, for Mr. T. (a very respectable surgeon of Ashburton) loved to repeat to me, when I first grew into notice, that he had frequently hunted with his bounds.

My grandfather was on ill terms with him; I believe, not without sufficient reason, for he was extravagant and dissipated. My father never mentioned his name, but my mother would sometimes tell me that he had ruined the family. That he spent much, I know; but I am inclined to think that his undutiful conduct occasioned my great-grandfather to bequeath a considerable part of the property from him.

My father, I fear, revenged in some manner the cause of my great-grandfather. He was, as I have heard my mother say, "a very wild young man, who could be kept to nothing." He was sent to the grammar-school at Exeter, from which he made his escape, and entered on board a man-of-war. He was reclaimed from this situation by my grandfather, and left his school a second time, to wander in some vagabond society. He was now probably given up; for he was, on return from



this notable adventure, reduced to article himself to a plumber and glazier, with whom he luckily stayed long enough to learn the business. I suppose his father was now dead, for he became possessed of two small estates, married my mother (the daughter of a carpenter at Ashburton), and thought himself rich enough to set up for himself, which he did, with some credit, at South Molton. Why he chose to fix there, I never inquired; but I learned from my mother that after a residence of four or five years, he thoughtlessly engaged in a frolic which drove him once more to sea: this was an attempt to excite a riot in a Methodist chapel, for which his companions were prosecuted, and he fled.

My father was a good seaman, and was soon made second in command in the *Lyon*, a large armed transport, in the service of government; while my mother returned to her native place, Ashburton, where I was born in April, 1756.

The resources of my mother were very scanty. They arose from the rent of three or four small fields, which yet remained unsold. With these, however, she did what she could for me; and as soon as I was old enough to be trusted out of her sight, sent me to a schoolmistress of the name of Parret, from whom I learned in due time to read. I cannot boast much of my acquisitions at this school; they consisted merely of the contents of the *Child's Spelling Book*, but from my mother, who had stored up the literature of a country town, which about half a century ago amounted to little more than what was disseminated by itinerant ballad-singers, or rather readers, I had acquired much curious knowledge of *Catskin*, and the *Golden Bull*, and many other histories equally instructive and amusing.

My father returned from sea in 1764. He had been at the siege of the Havannah: and though he received more than a hundred pounds for prize-money, and his wages were considerable, yet as he had not acquired any strict habits of economy, he brought home but a trifling sum. The little property yet left was therefore turned into money; a trifle more was got by agreeing to renounce all future pretensions to an estate at

Totnes; and with this my father set up a second time as a glazier and house-painter. I was now about eight years old, and was put to the free school (kept by Hugh Smerdon) to learn to read and write and cipher. Here I continued about three years, making a most wretched progress, when my father fell sick and died. He had not acquired wisdom from his misfortunes, but continued wasting his time in unprofitable pursuits to the great detriment of his business. He loved drink for the sake of society, and to this he fell a martyr, dying of a decayed and ruined constitution before he was forty. The townspeople thought him a shrewd and sensible man, and regretted his death. As for me, I never greatly loved him; I had not grown up with him, and he was too prone to repulse my little advances to familiarity with coldness or anger. He had certainly some reason to be displeased with me, for I learned little at school and nothing at home, though he would now and then attempt to give me some insight into his business. As impressions of any kind are not very strong at the age of eleven or twelve, I did not long feel his loss; nor was it a subject of much sorrow to me that my mother was doubtful of her ability to continue me at school, though I had by this time acquired a love for reading.

I never knew in what circumstances my mother was left most probably they were inadequate to her support, without some kind of exertion, especially as she was now burthened with a second child, about six or eight months old. Unfortunately she determined to prosecute my father's business, for which purpose she engaged a couple of journeymen, who, finding her ignorant of every part of it, wasted her property and embezzled her money. What the consequence of this double fraud would have been there was no opportunity of knowing, as, in somewhat less than a twelvemonth, my poor mother followed my father to the grave. She was an excellent woman, bore my father's infirmities with patience and good-humour, loved her children dearly, and died at last exhausted with anxiety and grief more on their account than her own.

I was not quite thirteen when this happened; my little

brother was hardly two; and we had not a relation nor a friend in the world. Everything that was left was seized by a person of the name of Carlile, for money advanced to my mother. It may be supposed that I could not dispute the justice of his claims; and, as no one else interfered, he was suffered to do as he liked. My little brother was sent to the alms-house, whither his nurse followed him out of pure affection; and I was taken to the house of the person I have just mentioned, who was also my godfather. Respect for the opinion of the town (which, whether correct or not, was that he had amply repaid himself by the sale of my mother's effects) induced him to send me again to school, where I was more diligent than before, and more successful. I grew fond of arithmetic, and my master began to distinguish me; but these golden days were over in less than three months. Carlile sickened at the expense; and as the people were now indifferent to my fate he looked round for an opportunity of ridding himself of a useless charge. He had previously attempted to engage me in the drudgery of husbandry. I drove the plough for one day to gratify him; but I left it with the resolution to do so no more, and in despite of his threats and promises adhered to my determination. In this I was guided no less by necessity than will. During my father's life, in attempting to clamber up a table I had fallen backwards, and drawn it after me; its edge fell upon my breast, and I never recovered the effects of the blow, of which I was made extremely sensible on any extraordinary exertion. Ploughing, therefore, was out of the question; and, as I have already said, I utterly refused to follow it.

As I could write and cipher (as the phrase is), Carlile next thought of sending me to Newfoundland to assist in a store-house. For this purpose he negotiated with a Mr. Holdsworthy of Dartmouth, who agreed to fit me out. I left Ashburton with little expectation of seeing it again, and indeed with little care, and rode with my godfather to the dwelling of Mr. Holdsworthy. On seeing me, this great man observed, with a look of pity and contempt, that I was "too small", and sent me away sufficiently mortified. I expected to be very ill.

received by my godfather, but he said nothing. He did not, however, choose to take me back himself, but sent me in a passage-boat to Totnes, from whence I was to walk home. On the passage the boat was driven by a midnight storm on the rocks, and I escaped almost by a miracle.

My godfather had now humbler views for me, and I had little heart to resist anything. He proposed to send me on board one of the Torbay fishing-boats; I ventured, however, to remonstrate against this, and the matter was compromised by my consenting to go on board a coaster. A coaster was speedily found for me at Brixham, and thither I went when little more than thirteen.

My master, whose name was Full, though a gross and ignorant was not an ill-natured man, at least not to me; and my mistress used me with unvarying kindness, moved, perhaps, by my weakness and tender years. In return I did what I could to requite her, and my good-will was not overlooked.

Our vessel was not very large, nor our crew very numerous. On ordinary occasions, such as short trips to Dartmouth, Plymouth, &c., it consisted only of my master, an apprentice nearly out of his time, and myself: when we had to go farther, to Portsmouth for example, an additional hand was hired for the voyage.

In this vessel (the *Two Brothers*) I continued nearly a twelvemonth; and here I got acquainted with nautical terms, and contracted a love for the sea which a lapse of thirty years has but little diminished.

It will be easily conceived that my life was a life of hardship. I was not only a "ship-boy on the high and giddy mast", but also in the cabin, where every menial office fell to my lot; yet, if I was restless and discontented, I can safely say it was not so much on account of this, as of my being precluded from all possibility of reading; as my master did not possess, nor do I recollect seeing during the whole time of my abode with him, a single book of any description, except the *Coasting Pilot*.

As my lot seemed to be cast, however, I was not negligent

in seeking such information as promised to be useful; and I therefore frequented, at my leisure hours, such vessels as dropped into Torbay. On attempting to get on board one of these, which I did at midnight, I missed my footing and fell into the sea. The floating away of the boat alarmed the man on deck, who came to the ship's side just in time to see me sink. He immediately threw out several ropes, one of which providentially (for I was unconscious of it) entangled itself about me, and I was drawn up to the surface, till a boat could be got round. The usual methods were taken to recover me, and I awoke in bed the next morning, remembering nothing but the horror I felt when I first found myself unable to call out for assistance.

This was not my only escape, but I forbear to speak of them. An escape of another kind was now preparing for me, which deserves all my notice, as it was decisive of my future fate.

On Christmas Day (1770) I was surprised by a message from my godfather, saying that he had sent a man and horse to bring me to Ashburton, and desiring me to set out without delay. My master, as well as myself, supposed it was to spend the holidays there, and he therefore made no objection to my going. We were, however, both mistaken.

Since I had lived at Brixham I had broken off all connection with Ashburton. I had no relation there but my poor brother, who was yet too young for any kind of correspondence; and the conduct of my godfather towards me did not entitle him to any portion of my gratitude or kind remembrance. I lived, therefore, in a sort of sullen independence of all I had formerly known, and thought without regret of being abandoned by everyone to my fate. But I had not been overlooked. The women of Brixham, who travelled to Ashburton twice a week with fish, and who had known my parents, did not see me, without kind concern, running about the beach in a ragged jacket and trousers. They mentioned this to the people of Ashburton, and never without commiserating my change of condition. This tale, often repeated, awakened at length the

pity of their auditors, and, as the next step, their resentment against the man who had brought me to such a state of wretchedness. In a large town this would have had but little effect, but in a place like Ashburton, where every report speedily becomes the common property of all the inhabitants, it raised a murmur which my godfather found himself either unable or unwilling to encounter; he therefore determined to recall me, which he could easily do, as I wanted some months of fourteen and was not yet bound.

All this I learned on my arrival; and my heart, which had been cruelly shut up, now opened to kinder sentiments and fairer views.

After the holidays I returned to my darling pursuit, arithmetic: my progress was now so rapid that in a few months I was at the head of the school, and qualified to assist my master (Mr. E. Furlong) on any extraordinary emergency. As he usually gave me a trifle on those occasions, it raised a thought in me, that, by engaging with him as a regular assistant, and undertaking the instruction of a few evening scholars, I might, with a little additional aid, be enabled to support myself. God knows my ideas of support at this time were of no very extravagant nature. I had, besides, another object in view. Mr. Hugh Smerdon (my first master) was now grown old and infirm; it seemed unlikely that he should hold out above three or four years; and I fondly flattered myself that, notwithstanding my youth, I might possibly be appointed to succeed him. I was in my fifteenth year when I built these castles, a storm, however, was collecting, which unexpectedly burst upon me and swept them all away.

On mentioning my little plan to Carlile he treated it with the utmost contempt, and told me, in his turn, that as I had learned enough, and more than enough, at school, he must be considered as having fairly discharged his duty (so, indeed, he had); he added, that he had been negotiating with his cousin, a shoemaker of some respectability, who had liberally agreed to take me without a fee as an apprentice. I was so shocked at this intelligence that I did not remonstrate, but went in

sullenness and silence to my new master, to whom I was soon after bound till I should attain the age of twenty-one.

The family consisted of four journeymen, two sons about my own age, and an apprentice somewhat older. In these there was nothing remarkable; but my master was the strangest creature. He was a Presbyterian, whose reading was entirely confined to the small tracts published on the Exeter controversy. As these (at least his portion of them) were all on one side, he entertained no doubt of their infallibility, and, being noisy and disputatious, was sure to silence his opponents; and became, in consequence of it, intolerably arrogant and conceited. He was not, however, indebted solely to his knowledge of the subject for his triumph; he was possessed of *Fenning's Dictionary*, and he made a most singular use of it. His custom was to fix on any word in common use, and then to get by heart the synonym or periphrasis by which it was explained in the book; this he constantly substituted for the simple term, and, as his opponents were commonly ignorant of his meaning, his victory was complete.

With such a man I was not likely to add much to my stock of knowledge, small as it was; and, indeed, nothing could well be smaller. At this period I had read nothing but a black-letter romance called *Parismus and Parimenus*, and a few loose magazines which my mother had brought from South Molton. With the Bible, indeed, I was well acquainted, it was the favourite study of my grandmother, and reading it frequently with her had impressed it strongly on my mind: these, then, with the *Imitation of Thomas à Kempis*, which I used to read to my mother on her death bed, constituted the whole of my literary acquisitions.

As I hated my new profession with a perfect hatred I made no progress in it, and was consequently little regarded in the family, of which I sank by degrees into the common drudge: this did not much disquiet me, for my spirits were now humbled. I did not, however, quite resign my hope of one day succeeding to Mr. Hugh Smerdon, and therefore secretly prosecuted my favourite study at every interval of leisure.

These intervals were not very frequent; and, when the use I made of them was found out, they were rendered still less so. I could not guess the motives for this at first; but at length I discovered that my master destined his youngest son for the situation to which I aspired.

I possessed at this time but one book in the world: it was a treatise on algebra, given me by a young woman, who had found it in a lodging-house. I considered it as a treasure; but it was a treasure locked up, for it supposed the reader to be well acquainted with simple equation, and I know nothing of the matter. My master's son had purchased *Fenning's Introduction*: this was precisely what I wanted; but he carefully concealed it from me, and I was indebted to chance alone for stumbling upon his hiding-place. I sat up for the greatest part of several nights successively, and, before he suspected that his treatise was discovered, had completely mastered it. I could now enter upon my own: and that carried me pretty far into the science.

This was not done without difficulty. I had not a farthing on earth, nor a friend to give me one: pen, ink, and paper, therefore (in despite of the flippant remark of Lord Orford), were, for the most part, as completely out of my reach as a crown and sceptre. There was, indeed, a resource; but the utmost caution and secrecy were necessary in applying to it. I beat out pieces of leather as smooth as possible, and wrought my problems on them with a blunted awl; for the rest, my memory was tenacious, and I could multiply and divide by it to a great extent.

Hitherto I had not so much as dreamed of poetry—indeed, I scarcely knew it by name; and, whatever may be said of the force of nature, I certainly never “lisped numbers.” I recollect the occasion of my first attempt: it is, like all the rest of my non-adventures, of so unimportant a nature that I should blush to call the attention of the idlest reader to it, but for the reason alleged in the introductory paragraph. A person, whose name escapes me, had undertaken to paint a sign for an ale-house; it was to have been a lion, but the unfor-



fortunate artist produced a dog. On this awkward affair one of my acquaintance wrote a copy of what we called verse: I liked it; but fancied I could compose something more to the purpose. I made the experiment, and, by the unanimous suffrage of my shopmates, was allowed to have succeeded. Notwithstanding this encouragement, I thought no more of verse till another occurrence, as trifling as the former, furnished me with a fresh subject: and thus I went on till I had got together about a dozen of them. Certainly nothing on earth was ever so deplorable; such as they were, however, they were talked of in my little circle, and I was sometimes invited to repeat them even out of it. I never committed a line to paper, for two reasons; first, because I had no paper; and secondly—perhaps I might be excused from going farther—but in truth I was afraid, as my master had already threatened me, for inadvertently hitching the name of one of his customers into a rhyme.

The repetitions of which I speak were always attended with applause, and sometimes with favours more substantial: little collections were now and then made, and I have received sixpence in an evening. To one who had long lived in the absolute want of money, such a resource seemed a Peruvian mine: I furnished myself by degrees with paper, &c., and, what was of more importance, with books of geometry and of the higher branches of algebra, which I cautiously concealed. Poetry, even at this time, was no amusement of mine: it was subservient to other purposes; and I only had recourse to it when I wanted money for my mathematical pursuits.

But the clouds were gathering fast: my master's anger was raised to a terrible pitch by my indifference to his concerns, and still more by the reports which were daily brought to him of my presumptuous attempts at versification. I was required to give up my papers, and when I refused, my garret was searched, and my little hoard of books discovered and removed, and all future repetitions prohibited in the strictest manner.

This was a very severe stroke, and I felt it most sensibly: it was followed by another severer still—a stroke which

crushed the hopes I had so long and so fondly cherished, and resigned me at once to despair. Mr. Hugh Sherdon, on succeeding whom I had calculated, died, and was succeeded by a person not much older than myself, and certainly not so well qualified for the situation.

I look back on that part of my life which immediately followed this event with little satisfaction; it was a period of gloom and savage unsociability: by degrees I sunk into a kind of corporeal torpor; or, if roused into activity by the spirit of youth, wasted the exertion in splenetic and vexatious tricks, which alienated the few acquaintances which compassion had yet left me. So, I crept on in silent discontent, unfriended and unpitied—indignant at the present, careless of the future—an object at once of apprehension and dislike.

From this state of abjectness I was raised by a young woman of my own class. She was a neighbour; and whenever I took my solitary walk, with my "Wolfius" in my pocket, she usually came to the door, and by a smile, or a short question put in the friendliest manner, endeavoured to solicit my attention. My heart had been long shut to kindness, but the sentiment was not dead in me: it revived at the first encouraging word; and the gratitude I felt for it was the first pleasing sensation which I had ventured to entertain for many dreary months.

Together with gratitude, hope, and other passions still more enlivening, took place of that uncomfortable gloominess which so lately possessed me: I returned to my companions, and by every winning art in my power strove to make them forget my former repulsive ways. In this I was not unsuccessful; I recovered their good-will, and by degrees grew to be somewhat of a favourite.

My master still murmured, for the business of the shop went on no better than before: I comforted myself, however, with the reflection that my apprenticeship was drawing to a conclusion, when I determined to renounce the employment for ever, and to open a private school.

In this humble and obscure state, poor beyond the common lot, yet flattering my ambition with day-dreams which perhaps

would never have been realized, I was found in the twentieth year of my age by Mr. William Cookesley, a name never to be pronounced by me without veneration. The lamentable doggerel which I have already mentioned, and which had passed from mouth to mouth among people of my own degree, had by some accident or other reached his ear, and given him a curiosity to inquire after the author.

It was my good fortune to interest his benevolence. My little history was not untinged with melancholy, and I laid it fairly before him: his first care was to console; his second, which he cherished to the last moment of his existence, was to relieve and support me.

Mr. Cookesley was not rich: his eminence in his profession, which was that of a surgeon, procured him, indeed, much employment; but in a country town men of science are not the most liberally rewarded. He had, besides, a very numerous family, which left him little for the purposes of general benevolence; that little, however, was cheerfully bestowed, and his activity and zeal were always at hand to support the deficiencies of his fortune.

On examining into the nature of my literary attainments he found them absolutely nothing; he heard, however, with equal surprise and pleasure, that, amidst the grossest ignorance of books, I had made a very considerable progress in the mathematics. He engaged me to enter into the details of this affair; and, when he learned that I had made it in circumstances of peculiar discouragement, he became more warmly interested in my favour, as he now saw a possibility of serving me.

The plan that occurred to him was naturally that which so often suggested itself to me. There were indeed several obstacles to be overcome: I had eighteen months yet to serve, my handwriting was bad, and my language very incorrect; but nothing could slacken the zeal of this excellent man; he procured a few of my poor attempts at rhyme, dispersed them amongst his friends and acquaintance, and, when my name was become somewhat familiar to them, set on foot a

subscription for my relief. I still preserve the original paper; its title was not very magnificent, though it exceeded the most sanguine wishes of my heart. It ran thus: "A subscription for purchasing the remainder of the time of William Gifford, and for enabling him to improve himself in writing and English grammar." Few contributed more than five shillings, and none went beyond ten-and-sixpence; enough, however, was collected to free me from my apprenticeship and to maintain me for a few months, during which I assiduously attended the Rev. Thomas Smerdon.

At the expiration of this period it was found that my progress (for I will speak the truth in modesty) had been more considerable than my patrons expected; I had also written in the interim several little pieces of poetry—less rugged, I suppose, than my former ones, and certainly with fewer anomalies of language. My preceptor, too, spoke favourably of me; and my benefactor, who was now become my father and my friend, had little difficulty in persuading my patrons to renew their donations, and to continue me at school for another year. Such liberality was not lost upon me; I grew anxious to make the best return in my power, and I redoubled my diligence. Now that I am sunk into indolence, I look back with some degree of scepticism to the exertions of that period.

In two years and two months from the day of my emancipation I was pronounced by Mr. Smerdon fit for the University. The plan of opening a writing-school had been abandoned almost from the first; and Mr. Cookesley looked round for some one who had interest enough to procure me some little office at Oxford. This person, who was soon found, was Thomas Taylor, Esq., of Denbury, a gentleman to whom I had already been indebted for much liberal and friendly support. He procured me the place of Bible Lect. at Exeter College; and this, with such occasional assistance from the country as Mr. Cookesley undertook to provide, was thought sufficient to enable me to live at least till I had taken a degree.

## WALTER · SCOTT.

[After the death of this great writer, the following autobiographical fragment, prefaced by an account of his family, was discovered in an old cabinet at Abbotsford. It appears to have been written in 1808, after he had become famous as a poet, but before he became the most popular novelist in Europe. Mr. J. G. Lockhart, his son-in-law, used it as the first chapter of the well-known biography.]

I was born, as I believe, on the 15th August, 1771, in a house belonging to my father, at the head of the College Wynd. It was pulled down, with others, to make room for the northern front of the new college. I was an uncommonly healthy child, but had nearly died in consequence of my first nurse being ill of a consumption, a circumstance which she chose to conceal, though to do so was murder to both herself and me. She went privately to consult Dr. Black, the celebrated professor of chemistry, who put my father on his guard. The woman was dismissed, and I was consigned to a healthy peasant, who is still alive to boast of her *laddie* being what she calls a *grand gentleman*. I showed every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months' old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed, and after being chased about the room, was apprehended and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning I was discovered to be affected with the fever which often accompanies the cutting of large teeth. It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg. My grandfather, an excellent anatomist as well as physician, the late worthy Alexander Wood, and many others of the most respectable of the faculty, were consulted. There appeared to be no dislocation or sprain; blisters and other topical remedies were applied in vain. When the efforts of regular physicians had been exhausted, without the

slightest success, my anxious parents, during the course of many years, eagerly grasped at every prospect of cure which was held out by the promise of empirics, or of ancient ladies or gentlemen who conceived themselves entitled to recommend various remedies, some of which were of a nature sufficiently singular. But the advice of my grandfather, Dr. Rutherford, that I should be sent to reside in the country, to give the chance of natural exertion, excited by free air and liberty, was first resorted to, and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was, agreeably to this friendly counsel, an inmate in the farmhouse of Sandy-Knowe.

An odd incident is worth recording. It seems my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, that I might be no inconvenience in the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was likely to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh, and as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection, for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the house-keeper, that she had carried me up to the Craigs, meaning, under a strong temptation of the devil, to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confident should not be subject to any farther temptation, so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed, of course, and I have heard became afterwards a lunatic.

It is here at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to to aid my lameness, some one had recommended that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed up in the skin, warm as it was flayed from the carcass of the animal. In this

Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farmhouse, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George MacDougal, of Makerston, father of the present Sir Henry Hay MacDougal, joining in this kindly attempt. He was, God knows how, a relation of ours, and I still recollect him in his old-fashioned military habit (he had been colonel of the Greys), with a small cocked hat, deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light-coloured coat, with milk-white locks tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year, for Sir George MacDougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.

My grandmother continued for some years to take charge of the farm, assisted by my father's second brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, who resided at Crailing, as factor or land-steward for Mr. Scott of Danesfield, then proprietor of that estate. This was during the heat of the American war, and I remember being as anxious on my uncle's weekly visits (for we heard news at no other time) to hear of the defeat of Washington, as if I had had some deep and personal cause of antipathy to him! I know not how this was combined with a very strong prejudice in favour of the Stuart family, which I had originally imbibed from the songs and tales of the Jacobites. This latter political propensity was deeply confirmed by the stories told in my hearing of the cruelties exercised in the executions at Carlisle, and in the Highlands, after the battle of Culloden. One or two of our own distant relations had fallen on that occasion, and I remember of detesting the name of Cumberland with more than infant hatred. Mr. Curle, farmer at Yetbyre, husband of one of my aunts, had been present at their execution; and it was probably from him that I first heard these tragic tales which made so great an impression on me. The

local information, which I conceive had some share in forming my future taste and pursuits, I derived from the old songs and tales which then formed the amusement of a retired country family. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes—merrymen all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated *Diel of Littledean*, whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother's sister. Of this extraordinary person I learned many a story, grave and gay, comie and warlike. Two or three old books which lay in the window-seat were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter days. *Autoethes*, and Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany* were my favourites, although at a later period an odd volume of Josephus's *Wars of the Jews* divided my partiality.

My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart. The ballad of Hardyknute I was early master of, to the great annoyance of almost our only visitor, the worthy clergyman of the parish, Dr. Duncan, who had not patience to have a sober chat interrupted by my shouting forth this ditty. Methinks I now see his tall thin emaciated figure, his legs cased in clasped gambadoes, and his face of a length that would have rivalled the Knight of La Mancha's, and hear him exclaiming, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is." With this little acidity, which was natural to him, he was a most excellent and benevolent man, a gentleman in every feeling, and altogether different from those of his order who cringe at the tables of the gentry, or domineer and riot at those of the yeomanry. In his youth he had been chaplain in the family of Lord Marchmont—had seen Pope—and could talk familiarly of many characters who had survived the Augustan age of Queen Anne. Though valetudinary, he lived to be nearly ninety, and to welcome to Scotland his son,



Colonel William Duncan, who, with the highest character for military and civil merit, had made a considerable fortune in India. In [1795], a few days before his death, I paid him a visit, to inquire after his health. I found him emaciated to the last degree, wrapped in a tartan night-gown, and employed with all the activity of health and youth in correcting a history of the Revolution, which he intended should be given to the public when he was no more. He read me several passages with a voice naturally strong, and which the feelings of an author then raised above the depression of age and declining health. I begged him to spare this fatigue, which could not but injure his health. His answer was remarkable. "I know," he said, "that I cannot survive a fortnight, and what signifies an exertion that can at worst only accelerate my death a few days?" I marvelled at the composure of this reply, for his appearance sufficiently vouched the truth of his prophecy, and rode home to my uncle's (then my abode), musing what there could be in the spirit of authorship that could inspire its votaries with the courage of martyrs. He died within less than the period he assigned, with which event I close my digression.

I was in my fourth year when my father was advised that the Bath waters might be of some advantage to my lameness. My affectionate aunt, although such a journey promised to a person of her retired habits anything but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud, as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering-place held out to its most impatient visitants. My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air, and the influence of that imperceptible and unfatiguing exercise to which the good sense of my grandfather had subjected me; for when the day was fine, I was usually carried out and laid down beside the old shepherd, among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my infirmity, and I began by degrees to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general

health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air, and in a word, who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child—*non sine diis animosus infans*.

We went to London by sea, and it may gratify the curiosity of minute biographers to learn that our voyage was performed in the *Duchess of Buccleuch*, Captain Beatson, master. At London we made a short stay, and saw some of the common shows exhibited to strangers. When, twenty-five years afterwards, I visited the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, I was astonished to find how accurate my recollections of these celebrated places of visitation proved to be, and I have ever since trusted more implicitly to my juvenile reminiscences. At Bath, where I lived about a year, I went through all the usual discipline of the pump-room and baths, but I believe without the least advantage to my lameness. During my residence at Bath I acquired the rudiments of reading at a day-school kept by an old dame near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. An occasional lesson from my aunt supplied the rest. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh, and finally from the Rev. Mr. Cleeve. But I never acquired a just pronunciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

In other respects my residence at Bath is marked by very pleasing recollections. The venerable John Home, author of *Douglas*, was then at the watering-place, and paid much attention to my aunt and to me. His wife, who has survived him, was then an invalid, and used to take the air in her carriage on the Downs, when I was often invited to accompany her. But the most delightful recollections of Bath are dated after the arrival of my uncle, Captain Robert Scott, who introduced me to all the little amusements which suited my age, and above all, to the theatre. The play was *As You Like It*, and the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and

remember being so much scandalized at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother in the first scene that I screamed out, "A'n't they brothers?" A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.

The other circumstances I recollect of my residence in Bath are but trifling, yet I never recall them without a feeling of pleasure. The beauties of the parade (which of them I know not), with the river Avon winding around it, and the lowing of the cattle from the opposite hills, are warm in my recollection, and are only rivalled by the splendours of a toy-shop somewhere near the Orange Grove. I had acquired, I know not by what means, a kind of superstitious terror for statuary of all kinds. No ancient Iconoclast or modern Calvinist could have looked on the outside of the Abbey church (if I mistake not, the principal church at Bath is so called) with more horror than the image of Jacob's Ladder, with all its angels, presented to my infant eye. My uncle effectually combated my terrors, and formally introduced me to a statue of Neptune, which perhaps still keeps guard at the side of the Avon, where a pleasure-boat crosses to Spring Gardens.

After being a year at Bath I returned first to Edinburgh and afterwards for a season to Sandy-Knowe; and thus the time whiled away till about my eighth year, when it was thought sea-bathing might be of service to my lameness.

For this purpose, still under my aunt's protection, I remained some weeks at Prestonpans, a circumstance not worth mentioning, excepting to record my juvenile intimacy with an old military veteran, Dalgetty by name, who had pitched his tent in that little village, after all his campaigns subsisting upon an ensign's half-pay, though called by courtesy a captain. As this old gentleman, who had been in all the German wars, found very few to listen to his tales of military feats, he formed a sort of alliance with me, and I used invariably to attend him for the pleasure of hearing those communications. Sometimes our conversation turned on the American war,

which was then raging. It was about the time of Burgoyne's unfortunate expedition, to which my captain and I augured different conclusions. Somebody had showed me a map of North America, and, struck with the rugged appearance of the country, and the quantity of lakes, I expressed some doubts on the subject of the general's arriving safely at the end of his journey, which were very indignantly refuted by the captain. The news of the Saratoga disaster, while it gave me a little triumph, rather shook my intimacy with the veteran. .

From Prestonpans I was transported back to my father's house in George's Square, which continued to be my most established place of residence, until my marriage in 1797. I felt the change from being a single indulged brat, to becoming a member of a large family, very severely; for under the gentle government of my kind grandmother, who was meekness itself, and of my aunt, who, though of an higher temper, was exceedingly attached to me, I had acquired a degree of licence which could not be permitted in a large family. I had sense enough, however, to bend my temper to my new circumstances; but such was the agony which I internally experienced, that I have guarded against nothing more, in the education of my own family, than against their acquiring habits of self-willed caprice and domination. I found much consolation during this period of mortification, in the partiality of my mother. She joined to a light and happy temper of mind a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination. ~~She~~ was sincerely devout, but her religion was, as became her sex, of a cast less austere than my father's. Still, the discipline of the Presbyterian Sabbath was severely strict, and I think injudiciously so. Although Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, Gesner's *Death of Abel*, Rowe's *Letters*, and one or two other books, which, for that reason, I still have a favour for, were admitted to relieve the gloom of one dull sermon succeeding to another—there was far too much tedium annexed to the duties of the day; and in the end it did none of us any good.

My week-day tasks were more agreeable. My lameness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and

my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope's translation of Homer, which, excepting a few traditional ballads, and the songs in Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen*, was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had good natural taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible—the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others—more willingly, however, in my hours of solitude, for I had observed some auditors smile, and I dreaded ridicule at that time of life more than I have ever done since.

In [1778] I was sent to the second class of the Grammar School, or High School of Edinburgh, then taught by Mr. Luke Fraser, a good Latin scholar and a very worthy man. Though I had received, with my brothers, in private, lessons of Latin from Mr. James French, now a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, I was nevertheless rather behind the class in which I was placed both in years and in progress. This was a real disadvantage, and one to which a boy of lively temper and talents ought to be as little exposed as one who might be less expected to make up his lee-way, as it is called. The situation has the unfortunate effect of reconciling a boy of the former character (which in a posthumous work I may claim for my own) to holding a subordinate station among his class-fellows—to which he would otherwise affix disgrace. There is also, from the constitution of the High School, a certain danger not sufficiently attended to. The boys take precedence in their *places*, as they are called, according to their merit, and it requires a long while, in general, before even a clever boy, if he falls behind the class, or is put into one for which he is not quite ready, can force his way to the situation

which his abilities really entitle him to hold. But, in the meanwhile, he is necessarily led to be the associate and companion of those inferior spirits with whom he is placed; for the system of precedence, though it does not limit the general intercourse among the boys, has nevertheless the effect of throwing them into clubs and coteries, according to the vicinity of the seats they hold. A boy of good talents, therefore, placed even for a time among his inferiors, especially if they be also his elders, learns to participate in their pursuits and objects of ambition, which are usually very distinct from the acquisition of learning: and it will be well if he does not also imitate them in that indifference which is contented with bustling over a lesson so as to avoid punishment, without affecting superiority or aiming at reward. It was probably owing to this circumstance, that, although at a more advanced period of life I have enjoyed considerable facility in acquiring languages, I did not make any great figure at the High School—or, at least, any exertions which I made were desultory and little to be depended on.

Our class contained some very excellent scholars. The first *Dux* was James Buchan, who retained his honoured place, almost without a day's interval, all the while we were at the High School. He was afterwards at the head of the medical staff in Egypt, and in exposing himself to the plague infection, by attending the hospitals there, displayed the same well-regulated and gentle, yet determined perseverance, which placed him most worthily at the head of his school-fellows, while many lads of livelier parts and dispositions held an inferior station. The next best scholars (*sed longo intervallo*) were my friend David Douglas, the heir and *élève* of the celebrated Adam Smith, and James Hope, now a Writer to the Signet, both since well known and distinguished in their departments of the law. As for myself, I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity, as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions, my good nature and a flow of ready

imagination rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts which I made to supply that disadvantage, by making up in address what I wanted in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favour; and in the winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fire-side, and happy was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator. I was also, though often negligent of my own task, always ready to assist my friends, and hence I had a little party of staunch partisans and adherents, stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head—the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So, on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the yards than in the class.<sup>1</sup>

My father did not trust our education solely to our High School lessons. We had a tutor at home, a young man of an excellent disposition, and a laborious student. He was bred to the Kirk, but unfortunately took such a very strong turn to fanaticism, that he afterwards resigned an excellent living in a seaport town, merely because he could not persuade the mariners of the guilt of setting sail of a Sabbath—in which, by the by, he was less likely to be successful, as, *cæteris paribus*, sailors, from an opinion that it is a fortunate omen, always choose to weigh anchor on that day. The calibre of this young man's understanding may be judged of by this anecdote; ~~but~~ in other respects, he was a faithful and active instructor; and from him chiefly I learned writing and arithmetic. I repeated to him my French lessons, and studied with him my themes in the classics, but not classically. I also acquired, by

<sup>1</sup> I read not long since, in that authentic record called the *Percy Anecdotes*, that I had been educated at Musselburgh school, where I had been distinguished as an absolute dunce; only Dr. Blair, seeing farther into the millstone, had pronounced there was fire in it. I never was at Musselburgh school in my life, and though I have met Dr. Blair at my father's and elsewhere, I never had the good fortune to attract his notice, to my knowledge. Lastly, I was never a dunce, nor thought to be so, but an incorrigibly idle imp, who was always longing to do something else than what was enjoined him.—[1826.]

disputing with him (for this he readily permitted), some knowledge of school-divinity and church-history, and a great acquaintance in particular with the old Books describing the early history of the Church of Scotland, the wars and sufferings of the Covenanters, and so forth. I, with a head on fire for chivalry, was a Cavalier; my friend was a Roundhead: I was a Tory, and he was a Whig. I hated Presbyterians, and admired Montrose with his victorious Highlanders; he liked the Presbyterian Ulysses, the dark and politic Argyle: so that we never wanted subjects of dispute; but our disputes were always amicable. In all these tenets there was no real conviction on my part, arising out of acquaintance with the views or principles of either party; nor had my antagonist address enough to turn the debate on such topics. I took up my politics at that period, as King Charles II. did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentlemanlike persuasion of the two.

After having been three years under Mr. Fraser, our class was, in the usual routine of the school, turned over to Dr. Adam, the Rector. It was from this respectable man that I first learned the value of the knowledge I had hitherto considered only as a burdensome task. It was the fashion to remain two years at his class, where we read Cæsar, and Livy, and Sallust, in prose; Virgil, Horace, and Terence, in verse. I had by this time mastered, in some degree, the difficulties of the language, and began to be sensible of its beauties. This was really gathering grapes from thistles; nor shall I soon forget the swelling of my little pride when the Rector pronounced, that though many of my school-fellows understood the Latin better, *Gualterus Scott* was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning. Thus encouraged, I distinguished myself by some attempts at poetical versions from Horace and Virgil. Dr. Adam used to invite his scholars to such essays, but never made them tasks. I gained some distinction upon these occasions, and the Rector in future took much notice of me, and his judicious mixture of censure and praise went far to counterbalance my habits of indolence and



inattention. I saw I was expected to do well, and I was piqued in honour to vindicate my master's favourable opinion. I climbed, therefore, to the "first form"; and, though I never made a first-rate Latinist, my schoolfellows, and what was of more consequence, I myself, considered that I had a character for learning to maintain. Dr. Adam, to whom I owed so much, never failed to remind me of my obligations when I had made some figure in the literary world. He was, indeed, deeply imbued with that fortunate vanity which alone could induce a man who has arms to pare and burn a muir, to submit to the yet more toilsome task of cultivating youth. As Catholics confide in the imputed righteousness of their saints, so did the good old Doctor plume himself upon the success of his scholars in life, all of which he never failed (and often justly) to claim as the creation, or at least the fruits, of his early instructions. He remembered the fate of every boy at his school during the fifty years he had superintended it, and always traced their success or misfortunes entirely to their attention or negligence when under his care. His "noisy mansion", which to others would have been a melancholy bedlam, was the pride of his heart; and the only fatigues he felt, amidst din and tumult, and the necessity of reading themes, hearing lessons, and maintaining some degree of order at the same time, were relieved by comparing himself to Cæsar, who could dictate to three secretaries at once;—so ready is vanity to lighten the labours of duty.

It is a pity that a man so learned, so admirably adapted for his station, so useful, so simple, so easily contented, should have had other subjects of mortification. But the magistrates of Edinburgh, not knowing the treasure they possessed in Dr. Adam, encouraged a savage fellow, called Nicol, one of the undermasters, in insulting his person and authority. This man was an excellent classical scholar, and an admirable convivial humourist (which latter quality recommended him to the friendship of Burns); but worthless, drunken, and inhumanly cruel to the boys under his charge. He carried his feud against the Rector within an inch of assassination, for he way-

laid and knocked him down in the dark. The favour which this worthless rival obtained in the town-council led to other consequences, which for some time clouded poor Adam's happiness and fair fame. When the French Revolution broke out, and parties ran high in approving of condemning it, the Doctor incautiously joined the former. This was very natural, for as all his ideas of existing governments were derived from his experience of the town-council of Edinburgh, it must be admitted they scarce brooked comparison with the free states of Rome and Greece, from which he borrowed his opinions concerning republics. His want of caution in speaking on the political topics of the day lost him the respect of the boys, most of whom were accustomed to hear very different opinions on those matters in the bosom of their families. This, however (which was long after my time), passed away with other heats of the period, and the Doctor continued his labours till about a year since, when he was struck with palsy while teaching his class. He survived a few days, but becoming delirious before his dissolution, conceived he was still in school, and after some expressions of applause or censure, he said, "But it grows dark—the boys may dismiss",—and instantly expired.

From Dr. Adam's class I should, according to the usual routine, have proceeded immediately to college. But, fortunately, I was not yet to lose, by a total dismission from constraint, the acquaintance with the Latin which I had acquired. My health had become rather delicate from rapid growth, and my father was easily persuaded to allow me to spend half-a-year at Kelso with my kind aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose inmate I again became. It was hardly worth mentioning that I had frequently visited her during our short vacations.

At this time she resided in a small house, situated very pleasantly in a large garden, to the eastward of the churchyard of Kelso, which extended down to the Tweed. It was then my father's property, from whom it was afterwards purchased by my uncle. My grandmother was now dead, and my aunt's only companion, besides an old maid-servant, was my cousin, Miss Barbara Scott, now Mrs. Meik. My time was here left

entirely to my own disposal, excepting for about four hours in the day, when I was expected to attend the grammar-school of the village. The teacher, at that time, was Mr. Lancelot Whale, an excellent classical scholar, a humorist, and a worthy man. He had a supreme antipathy to the puns which his very uncommon name frequently gave rise to; insomuch, that he made his son spell the word *Wale*, which only occasioned the young man being nicknamed *the Prince of Wales* by the military mess to which he belonged. As for Whale, senior, the least allusion to Jonah, or the terming him an odd fish, or any similar quibble, was sure to put him beside himself. In point of knowledge and taste, he was far too good for the situation he held, which only required that he should give his scholars a rough foundation in the Latin language. My time with him, though short, was spent greatly to my advantage and his gratification. He was glad to escape to Persius and Tacitus from the eternal Rudiments and Cornelius Nepos; and as perusing these authors with one who began to understand them was to him a labour of love, I made considerable progress under his instructions. I suspect, indeed, that some of the time dedicated to me was withdrawn from the instruction of his more regular scholars; but I was as grateful as I could. I acted as usher, and heard the inferior classes, and I spouted the speech of Galgacus at the public examination, which did not make the less impression on the audience that few of them probably understood one word of it.

In the meanwhile my acquaintance with English literature was gradually extending itself. In the intervals of my school hours I had always perused with avidity such books of history or poetry or voyages and travels as chance presented to me—not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times the usual, quantity of fairy tales, eastern stories, romances, &c. These studies were totally unregulated and undirected. My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem; and my mother, besides that she might be in some degree trammelled by the religious scruples which he suggested, had no longer the opportunity to hear me read poetry as formerly. I found,

however, in her dressing-room (where I slept at one time) some odd volumes of Shakspeare, nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sat up, in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock. Chance, however, threw in my way a poetical preceptor. This was no other than the excellent and benevolent Dr. Blacklock, well known at that time as a literary character. I know not how I attracted his attention, and that of some of the young men who boarded in his family; but so it was that I became a frequent and favoured guest. The kind old man opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both, yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. The tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner than might have been expected from my age. But Spenser I could have read for ever. Too young to trouble myself about the allegory, I considered all the knights and ladies and dragons and giants in their outward and exoteric sense, and God only knows how delighted I was to find myself in such society. As I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted merely upon its own capricious motion, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer, when complimented by a certain reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty—"No, sir," answered the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy, and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying." My memory was precisely of the same kind: it seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favourite passage of poetry, a playhouse ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history

escaped me in a most melancholy degree.. The philosophy of history, a much more important subject, was also a sealed book at this period of my life; but I gradually assembled much of what was striking and picturesque in historical narrative; and when, in riper years, I attended more to the deduction of general principles, I was furnished with a powerful host of examples in illustration of them. I was, in short, like an ignorant gamester, who kept up a good hand until he knew how to play it.

I left the High School, therefore, with a great quantity of general information, ill arranged, indeed, and collected without system, yet deeply impressed upon my mind; readily assorted by my power of connection and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so, by a vivid and active imagination. If my studies were not under any direction at Edinburgh, in the country, it may be well imagined, they were less so. A respectable subscription library, a circulating library of ancient standing, and some private book-shelves, were open to my random perusal, and I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it. My appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose.

Among the valuable acquisitions I made about this time was an acquaintance with Tasso's *Jerusalem Believed*, through the flat medium of Mr. Hoole's translation. But above all, I then first became acquainted with Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. As I had been from infancy devoted to legendary lore of this nature, and only reluctantly withdrew my attention, from the scarcity of materials and the rudeness of those which I possessed, it may be imagined, but cannot be described, with what delight I saw pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood, and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination, considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration, by an editor who showed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of

what his pious labour preserved. I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbour in the garden I have mentioned. The summer day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with fragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes, nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. About this period also I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, and those of Mackenzie (whom in later years I became entitled to call my friend), with Fielding, Smollett, and some others of our best novelists.

To this period also I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighbourhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas. It presents objects, not only grand in themselves, but venerable from their association. The meeting of two superb rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, both renowned in song—the ruins of an ancient Abbey—the more distant vestiges of Roxburgh Castle—the modern mansion of Fleurs, which is so situated as to combine the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern taste—are in themselves objects of the first class; yet are so mixed, united, and melted among a thousand other beauties of a less prominent description, that they harmonize into one general picture, and please rather by unison than by concord. I believe I have written unintelligibly upon this subject, but it is fitter for the pencil than the pen. The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, natur-

ally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents, or traditional legends, connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.

I was recalled to Edinburgh about the time when the College meets, and put at once to the Humanity class, under Mr. Hill, and the first Greek class, taught by Mr. Dalzell. The former held the reins of discipline very loosely, and though beloved by his students, for he was a good-natured man as well as a good scholar, he had not the art of exciting our attention as well as liking. This was a dangerous character with whom to trust one who relished labour as little as I did, and amid the riot of his class I speedily lost much of what I had learned under Adam and Whale. At the Greek class, I might have made a better figure, for Professor Dalzell maintained a great deal of authority, and was not only himself an admirable scholar, but was always deeply interested in the progress of his students. But here lay the villainy. Almost all my companions who had left the High School at the same time with myself, had acquired a smattering of Greek before they came to College. I, alas! had none; and finding myself far inferior to all my fellow-students, I could hit upon no better mode of vindicating my equality than by professing my contempt for the language, and my resolution not to learn it. A youth who died early, himself an excellent Greek scholar, saw my negligence and folly with pain, instead of contempt. He came to call on me in George's Square, and pointed out in the strongest terms the silliness of the conduct I had adopted, told me I was distinguished by the name of the *Greek Block-head*, and exhorted me to redeem my reputation while it was called to-day. My stubborn pride received this advice with

sulky civility; the birth of my Mentor (whose name was Archibald, the son of an inn-keeper) did not, as I thought in my folly, authorize him to intrude upon me his advice. The other was not sharp-sighted, or his consciousness of a generous intention overcame his resentment. He offered me his daily and nightly assistance, and pledged himself to bring me forward with the foremost of my class. I felt some twinges of conscience, but they were unable to prevail over my pride and self-conceit. The poor lad left me more in sorrow than in anger, nor did we ever meet again. All hopes of my progress in the Greek were now over; insomuch that when we were required to write essays on the authors we had studied, I had the audacity to produce a composition in which I weighed Homer against Ariosto, and pronounced him wanting in the balance. I supported this heresy by a profusion of bad reading and flimsy argument. The wrath of the professor was extreme, while at the same time he could not suppress his surprise at the quantity of out-of-the-way knowledge which I displayed. He pronounced upon me the severe sentence—that dunce I was, and dunce was to remain—which, however, my excellent and learned friend lived to revoke over a bottle of Burgundy at our literary club at Fortune's, of which he was a distinguished member.

Meanwhile, as if to eradicate my slightest tincture of Greek, I fell ill during the middle of Mr. Dalzell's second class, and migrated a second time to Kelso—where I again continued a long time reading what and how I pleased, and of course reading nothing but what afforded me immediate entertainment. The only thing which saved my mind from utter dissipation was that turn for historical pursuit which never abandoned me even at the idlest period. I had forsworn the Latin classics for no reason I know of, unless because they were akin to the Greek; but the occasional perusal of Buchanan's history, that of Mathew Paris, and other monkish chronicles, kept up a kind of familiarity with the language even in its rudest state. But I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet; a loss never to be repaired, considering what



that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions.

About this period—or soon afterwards—my father judged it proper I should study mathematics, a study upon which I entered with all the ardour of novelty. My tutor was an aged person, Dr. MacFait, who had in his time been distinguished as a teacher of this science. Age, however, and some domestic inconveniences, had diminished his pupils, and lessened his authority amongst the few who remained. I think that had I been more fortunately placed for instruction, or had I had the spur of emulation, I might have made some progress in this science, of which, under the circumstances I have mentioned, I only acquired a very superficial smattering.

In other studies I was rather more fortunate; I made some progress in Ethics under Professor John Bruce, and was selected as one of his students whose progress he approved, to read an essay before Principal Robertson. I was farther instructed in Moral Philosophy at the class of Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose striking and impressive eloquence riveted the attention even of the most volatile student. To sum up my academical studies, I attended the class of History, then taught by the present Lord Woodhouselee, and, as far as I remember, no others, excepting those of the Civil and Municipal Law. So that if my learning be flimsy and inaccurate, the reader must have some compassion even for an idle workman, who had so narrow a foundation to build upon. If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages, let such a reader remember that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.

I imagine my father's reason for sending me to so few classes in the College was a desire that I should apply myself

particularly to my legal studies. He had not determined whether I should fill the situation of an Advocate or a Writer; but judiciously considering the technical knowledge of the latter to be useful at least, if not essential, to a barrister, he resolved I should serve the ordinary apprenticeship of five years to his own profession. I accordingly entered into indentures with my father about 1785-6, and entered upon the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances.

I cannot reproach myself with being entirely an idle apprentice—far less, as the reader might reasonably have expected,

“A clerk foredoom’d my father’s soul to cross.”

The drudgery, indeed, of the office, I disliked, and the confinement I altogether detested; but I loved my father, and I felt the rational pride and pleasure of rendering myself useful to him. I was ambitious also; and among my companions in labour, the only way to gratify ambition was to labour hard and well. Other circumstances reconciled me in some measure to the confinement. The allowance for copy-money furnished a little fund for the *menus plaisirs* of the circulating library and the theatre, and this was no trifling incentive to labour. When actually at the oar, no man could pull it harder than I, and I remember writing upwards of 120 folio pages with no interval either for food or rest. Again, the hours of attendance on the office were lightened by the power of choosing my own books and reading them in my own way, which often consisted in beginning at the middle or the end of a volume. A deceased friend, who was a fellow-apprentice with me, used often to express his surprise that, after such a hop-step-and-jump perusal, I knew as much of the book as he had been able to acquire from reading it in the usual manner. My desk usually contained a store of most miscellaneous volumes, especially works of fiction of every kind, which were my supreme delight. I might except novels, unless those of the better and higher class, for though I read many of them, yet it was with more selection than might have been expected. The whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe I abhorred, and

it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie, to fix my attention upon a domestic tale. But all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much discrimination, and I really believe I have read as much nonsense of this class as any man now living. Everything which touched on knight-errantry was particularly acceptable to me, and I soon attempted to imitate what I so greatly admired. My efforts, however, were in the manner of the tale-teller, not of the bard.

My greatest intimate, from the days of my school-tide, was Mr. John Irving, now a Writer to the Signet. We lived near each other, and by joint agreement were wont, each of us, to compose a romance for the other's amusement. These legends, in which the martial and the miraculous always predominated, we rehearsed to each other during our walks, which were usually directed to the most solitary spots about Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. We naturally sought seclusion, for we were conscious no small degree of ridicule would have attended our amusement, if the nature of it had become known. Whole holidays were spent in this singular pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose.

Meanwhile, the translations of Mr. Hoole having made me acquainted with Tasso and Ariosto, I learned from his notes on the latter, that the Italian language contained a fund of romantic lore. A part of my earnings was dedicated to an Italian class which I attended twice a week, and rapidly acquired some proficiency. I had previously renewed and extended my knowledge of the French language, from the same principle of romantic research. Tressan's romances, the *Bibliothèque Bleue*, and *Bibliothèque de Romans*, were already familiar to me, and I now acquired similar intimacy with the works of Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, and other eminent Italian authors. I fastened also, like a tiger, upon every collection of old songs or romances which chance threw in my way, or which my scrutiny was able to discover on the dusty shelves of James Sibbald's circulating library in the Parliament Square. This

collection, now dismantled and dispersed, contained at that time many rare and curious works, seldom found in such a collection. Mr. Sibbald himself, a man of rough manners but of some taste and judgment, cultivated music and poetry, and in his shop I had a distant view of some literary characters, besides the privilege of ransacking the stores of old French and Italian books, which were in little demand among the bulk of subscribers. Here I saw the unfortunate Andrew Macdonald, author of *Vimonda*; and here, too, I saw at a distance the boast of Scotland, Robert Burns. Of the latter I shall presently have occasion to speak more fully.

I am inadvertently led to confound dates while I talk of this remote period, for, as I have no notes, it is impossible for me to remember with accuracy the progress of studies, if they deserve the name, so irregular and miscellaneous. But about the second year of my apprenticeship, my health, which, from rapid growth and other causes, had been hitherto rather uncertain and delicate, was affected by the breaking of a blood-vessel. The regimen I had to undergo on this occasion was far from agreeable. It was spring, and the weather raw and cold, yet I was confined to bed with a single blanket, and bled and blistered till I scarcely had a pulse left. I had all the appetite of a growing boy, but was prohibited any sustenance beyond what was absolutely necessary for the support of nature, and that in vegetables alone. Above all, with a considerable disposition to talk, I was not permitted to open my lips without one or two old ladies who watched my couch being ready at once to souse upon me, "imposing silence with a stilly sound." My only refuge was reading and playing at chess. To the romances and poetry, which I chiefly delighted in, I had always added the study of history, especially as connected with military events. I was encouraged in this latter study by a tolerable acquaintance with geography, and by the opportunities I had enjoyed, while with Mr. MacFait, to learn the meaning of the more ordinary terms of fortification. While, therefore, I lay in this dreary and silent solitude, I fell upon the resource of illustrating the battles I read of by the childish

expedient of arranging shells, and seeds, and pebbles, so as to represent encountering armies. Diminutive cross-bows were contrived to mimic artillery, and with the assistance of a friendly carpenter, I contrived to model a fortress, which, like that of Uncle Toby, represented whatever place happened to be uppermost in my imagination. I fought my way thus through Vertot's *Knights of Malta* — a book which, as it hovered between history and romance, was exceedingly dear to me; and Orme's interesting and beautiful *History of Indostan*, whose copious plans, aided by the clear and luminous explanations of the author, rendered my imitative amusement peculiarly easy. Other moments of these weary weeks were spent in looking at the Meadow walks, by assistance of a combination of mirrors so arranged that, while lying in bed, I could see the troops march out to exercise, or any other incident which occurred on that promenade.

After one or two relapses, my constitution recovered the injury it had sustained, though for several months afterwards I was restricted to a severe vegetable diet. And I must say, in passing, that though I gained health under this necessary restriction, yet it was far from being agreeable to me, and I was affected whilst under its influence with a nervousness which I never felt before or since. A disposition to start upon slight alarms—a want of decision in feeling and acting, which has not usually been my failing—an acute sensibility to trifling inconveniences—and an unnecessary apprehension of contingent misfortunes, rise to my memory as connected with my vegetable diet, although they may very possibly have been entirely the result of the disorder, and not of the cure. Be this as it may, with this illness I bade farewell both to disease and medicine, for since that time, till the hour I am now writing, I have enjoyed a state of the most robust health, having only had to complain of occasional headaches or stomachic affections, when I have been long without taking exercise, or have lived too convivially—the latter having been occasionally, though not habitually, the error of my youth, as the former has been of my advanced life.

My frame gradually became hardened with my constitution, and being both tall and muscular, I was rather disfigured than disabled by my lameness. This personal disadvantage did not prevent me from taking much exercise on horseback, and making long journeys on foot, in the course of which I often walked from twenty to thirty miles a day. A distinct instance occurs to me. I remember walking with poor James Ramsay, my fellow-apprentice, now no more, and two other friends, to breakfast at Prestonpans. We spent the forenoon in visiting the ruins at Seton, and the field of battle at Preston—dined at Prestonpans on *tiled haddocks*, very sumptuously—drank half a bottle of port each, and returned in the evening. This could not be less than thirty miles, nor do I remember being at all fatigued upon the occasion.

These excursions on foot or horseback formed by far my most favourite amusement. I have all my life delighted in travelling, though I have never enjoyed that pleasure upon a large scale. It was a propensity which I sometimes indulged so unduly as to alarm and vex my parents. Wood, water, wilderness itself, had an inexpressible charm for me, and I had a dreamy way of going much further than I intended, so that unconsciously my return was protracted, and my parents had sometimes serious cause of uneasiness. For example, I once set out with Mr. George Abercromby (the son of the immortal general), Mr. William Clerk, and some others, to fish in the lake above Howgate, and the stream which descends from it into the Esk. We breakfasted at Howgate, and fished the whole day; and while we were on our return next morning I was easily seduced by William Clerk, then a great intimate, to visit Pennycuik House, the seat of his family. Here he and John Irving, and I for their sake, were overwhelmed with kindness by the late Sir John Clerk and his lady, the present Dowager Lady Clerk. The pleasure of looking at fine pictures, the beauty of the place, and the flattering hospitality of the owners drowned all recollection of home for a day or two. Meanwhile our companions, who had walked on without being aware of our digression; returned to Edinburgh without us,

and excited no small alarm in my father's household. At length, however, they became accustomed to my escapades. My father used to protest to me on such occasions that he thought I was born to be a strolling pedlar, and though the prediction was intended to mortify my conceit, I am not sure that I altogether disliked it. I was now familiar with Shakespeare, and thought of Autolycus's song—

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,  
And merrily hent the stile-a :  
A merry heart goes all the day,  
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

My principal object in these excursions was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery, or, what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events. The delight with which I regarded the former, of course, had general approbation, but I often found it difficult to procure sympathy with the interest I felt in the latter. Yet to me the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling Castle. I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary, few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other, to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect. I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety, though my latter studies have led me to amend and arrange my original ideas upon the subject. Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand was totally ineffectual. After long study and many efforts, I was unable to apply the elements of perspective or of shade to the scene before me, and was obliged to relinquish in despair an art which I was most anxious to practise. But show me an old castle or a field of battle, and I was at

home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and overwhelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description. In crossing Magnus Moor, near St. Andrews, the spirit moved me to give a picture of the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews to some fellow-travellers with whom I was accidentally associated; and one of them, though well acquainted with the story, protested my narrative had frightened away his night's sleep. I mention this to show the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery. If I have since been able in poetry to trace with some success the principles of the latter, it has always been with reference to its general and leading features, or under some alliance with moral feeling; and even this proficiency has cost me study.—Meanwhile I endeavoured to make amends for my ignorance of drawing by adopting a sort of technical memory respecting the scenes I visited. Wherever I went I cut a piece of a branch from a tree—these constituted what I called my log-book; and I intended to have a set of chessmen out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut—as the kings from Falkland and Holy-rood; the queens from Queen Mary's yew-tree at Crookston; the bishops from abbeys or episcopal palaces; the knights from baronial residences; the rooks from royal fortresses; and the pawns generally from places worthy of historical note. But this whimsical design I never carried into execution.

With music it was even worse than with painting. My mother was anxious we should at least learn Psalmody; but the incurable defects of my voice and ear soon drove my teacher to despair.<sup>1</sup> It is only by long practice that I have acquired the power of selecting or distinguishing melodies;

<sup>1</sup> The late Alexander Campbell, a warm-hearted man, and an enthusiast in Scottish music, which he sang most beautifully, had this ungrateful task imposed on him. He was a man of many accomplishments, but dashed with a *bizarrie* of temper which made them useless to their proprietor. He wrote several books—as *A Tour in Scotland*, &c.—and he made an advantageous marriage, but fell nevertheless into distressed circumstances, which I had the pleasure of relieving, if I could not remove. His sense of gratitude was very strong, and showed itself oddly in one respect. He



and although now few things delight or affect me more than a simple tune sung with feeling, yet I am sensible that even this pitch of musical taste has only been gained by attention and habit, and, as it were, by my feeling of the words being associated with the tune. I have, therefore, been usually unsuccessful in composing words to a tune, although my friend, Dr. Clarke, and other musical composers, have sometimes been able to make a happy union between their music and my poetry.

In other points, however, I began to make some amends for the irregularity of my education. It is well known that in Edinburgh one great spur to emulation among youthful students is in those associations called *literary societies*, formed not only for the purpose of debate, but of composition. These undoubtedly have some disadvantages where a bold, petulant, and disputatious temper happens to be combined with considerable information and talent. Still, however, in order to such a person being actually spoiled by his mixing in such debates, his talents must be of a very rare nature, or his effrontery must be proof to every species of assault; for there is generally in a well-selected society of this nature talent sufficient to meet the forwardest, and satire enough to penetrate the most undaunted. I am particularly obliged to this sort of club for introducing me about my seventeenth year into the society which at one time I had entirely dropped; for, from the time of my illness at college, I had had little or no intercourse with any of my class-companions, one or two only excepted. Now, however, about 1788, I began to feel and take my ground in society. A ready wit, a good deal of enthusiasm, and a perception that soon ripened into tact and observation of char-

would never allow that I had a bad ear; but contended, that if I did not understand music, it was because I did not choose to learn it. But when he attended us in George's Square, our neighbour, Lady Cumming, sent to beg the boys might not be all flogged precisely at the same hour, as, though she had no doubt the punishment was deserved, the noise of the concord was really dreadful. Robert was the only one of our family who could sing, though my father was musical, and a performer on the violoncello at the *gentlemen's concerts*.—[1826.]

acter, rendered me an acceptable companion to many young men whose acquisitions in philosophy and science were infinitely superior to anything I could boast.

In the business of these societies, for I was a member of more than one successively—I cannot boast of having made any great figure. I never was a good speaker unless upon some subject which strongly animated my feelings; and, as I was totally unaccustomed to composition, as well as to the art of generalizing my ideas upon any subject, my literary essays were but very poor work. I never attempted them unless when compelled to do so by the regulations of the society, and then I was like the Lord of Castle Rackrent, who was obliged to cut down a tree to get a few faggots to boil the kettle; for the quantity of ponderous and miscellaneous knowledge, which I really possessed on many subjects, was not easily condensed, or brought to bear upon the object I wished particularly to become master of. Yet there occurred opportunities when this odd lumber of my brain, especially that which was connected with the recondite parts of history, did me, as Hamlet says, “yeoman’s service.” My memory of events was like one of the large, old-fashioned stone-cannons of the Turks—very difficult to load well and discharge, but making a powerful effect when by good chance any object did come within range of its shot. Such fortunate opportunities of exploding with effect maintained my literary character among my companions, with whom I soon met with great indulgence and regard. The persons with whom I chiefly lived at this period of my youth were William Clerk, already mentioned; James Edmonstoun, of Newton; George Abercromby; Adam Ferguson, son of the celebrated Professor Ferguson, and who combined the lightest and most airy temper with the best and kindest disposition; John Irving, already mentioned; the Honourable Thomas Douglas, now Earl of Selkirk; David Boyle,—and two or three others, who sometimes plunged deeply into politics and metaphysics, and not infrequently “doffed the world aside, and bid it pass.”

Looking back on these times, I cannot applaud in all

respects the way in which our days were spent. There was too much idleness, and sometimes too much conviviality; but our hearts were warm, our minds honourably bent on knowledge and literary distinction; and if I, certainly the least informed of the party, may be permitted to bear witness, we were not without the fair and creditable means of attaining the distinction to which we aspired. In this society I was naturally led to correct my former useless course of reading; for—feeling myself greatly inferior to my companions in metaphysical philosophy and other branches of regular study—I laboured, not without some success, to acquire at least such a portion of knowledge as might enable me to maintain my rank in conversation. In this I succeeded pretty well; but unfortunately then, as often since through my life, I incurred the deserved ridicule of my friends from the superficial nature of my acquisitions, which being, in the mercantile phrase, *got up* for society, very often proved flimsy in the texture; and thus the gifts of an uncommonly retentive memory and acute powers of perception were sometimes detrimental to their possessor, by encouraging him to a presumptuous reliance upon them.

Amidst these studies, and in this society, the time of my apprenticeship elapsed; and in 1790, or thereabouts, it became necessary that I should seriously consider to which department of the law I was to attach myself. My father behaved with the most parental kindness. He offered, if I preferred his own profession, immediately to take me into partnership with him, which, though his business was much diminished, still afforded me an immediate prospect of a handsome independence. But he did not disguise his wish that I should relinquish this situation to my younger brother, and embrace the more ambitious profession of the bar. I had little hesitation in making my choice—for I was never very fond of money; and in no other particular do the professions admit of a comparison. Besides, I knew and felt the inconveniences attached to that of a writer; and I thought (like a young man) many of them were "*ingenio non subeunda meo.*" The appearance of per-

sonal dependence which that profession requires ~~was~~ disagreeable to me; the sort of connection between the client and the attorney seemed to render the latter more subservient than was quite agreeable to my nature; and, besides, I had seen many sad examples, while ~~overlooking~~ my father's business, that the utmost exertions, and the best-meant services, do not secure the *man of business*, as he is called, from great loss, and most ungracious treatment on the part of his employers. The bar, though I was conscious of my deficiencies as a public speaker, was the line of ambition and liberty; it was that also for which most of my contemporary friends were destined. And, lastly, although I would willingly have relieved my father of the labours of his business, yet I saw plainly we could not have agreed on some particulars if we had attempted to conduct it together, and that I should disappoint his expectations if I did not turn to the bar. So to that object my studies were directed with great ardour and perseverance during the years 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792.

In the usual course of study, the Roman or Civil Law was the first object of my attention—the second, the Municipal Law of Scotland. In the course of reading on both subjects, I had the advantage of studying in conjunction with my friend William Clerk, a man of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension, and who, should he ever shake loose the fetters of indolence by which he has been hitherto trammelled, cannot fail to be distinguished in the highest degree. We attended the regular classes of both laws in the University of Edinburgh. The Civil Law chair, now worthily filled by Mr. Alexander Irving, might at that time be considered as in *abeyance*, since the person by whom it was occupied had never been fit for the situation, and was then almost in a state of dotage. But the Scotch Law lectures were those of Mr. David Hume, who still continues to occupy that situation with as much honour to himself as advantage to his country. I copied over his lectures twice with my own hand, from notes taken in the class, and when I have had occasion to consult them, I can never sufficiently admire the penetration and clearness of

conception which were necessary to the arrangement of the fabric of law, formed originally under the strictest influence of feudal principles, and innovated, altered, and broken in upon by the change of times, of habits, and of manners, until it resembles some ancient castle, partly entire, partly ruinous, partly dilapidated, patched and altered during the succession of ages by a thousand additions and combinations, yet still exhibiting, with the marks of its antiquity, symptoms of the skill and wisdom of its founders, and capable of being analysed and made the subject of a methodical plan by an architect who can understand the various styles of the different ages in which it was subjected to alteration. Such an architect has Mr. Hume been to the law of Scotland, neither wandering into fanciful and abstruse disquisitions, which are the more proper subject of the antiquary, nor satisfied with presenting to his pupils a dry and undigested detail of the laws in their present state, but combining the past state of our legal enactments with the present, and tracing clearly and judiciously the changes which took place, and the causes which led to them.

Under these auspices, I commenced my legal studies. A little parlour was assigned me in my father's house, which was spacious and convenient, and I took the exclusive possession of my new realms with all the feelings of novelty and liberty. Let me do justice to the only years of my life in which I applied to learning with stern, steady, and undeviating industry. The rule of my friend Clerk and myself was, that we should mutually qualify ourselves for undergoing an examination upon certain points of law every morning in the week, Sundays excepted. This was at first to have taken place alternately at each other's houses, but we soon discovered that my friend's resolution was inadequate to severing him from his couch at the early hour fixed for this exercitation. Accordingly, I agreed to go every morning to his house, which, being at the extremity of Prince's Street, New Town, was a walk of two miles. With great punctuality, however, I beat him up to his task every morning before seven o'clock, and in the course of two summers we went, by way of question and answer, through

the whole of Heineccius's *Analysis of the Institutes and Pandects*, as well as through the smaller copy of Erskine's *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*. This course of study enabled us to pass with credit the usual trials, which, by the regulations of the Faculty of Advocates, must be undergone by every candidate for admission into their body. My friend William Clerk and I passed these ordeals on the same days—namely, the Civil Law trial on the [30th June, 1791], and the Scots Law trial on the [6th July, 1792]. On the [11th July, 1792], we both assumed the gown with all its duties and honours.

My progress in life during these two or three years had been gradually enlarging my acquaintance, and facilitating my entrance into good company. My father and mother, already advanced in life, saw little society at home, excepting that of hear relations, or upon particular occasions, so that I was left to form connections in a great measure for myself. It is not difficult for a youth with a real desire to please and be pleased, to make his way into good society in Edinburgh—or indeed anywhere—and my family connections, if they did not greatly further, had nothing to embarrass my progress. I was a gentleman, and so welcome anywhere, if so be I could behave myself, as Tony Lumpkin says, “in a concatenation accordingly.”

[Here Sir Walter's account of himself breaks off abruptly. It may well be supplemented by an extract from Mr. J. G. Lockhart's memoirs, going to show how his father-in-law, as modest as he was great, had too much depreciated the early promise manifest to others.]

He says that his consciousness of existence dated from Sandy-Knowe; and how deep and indelible was the impression which its romantic localities had left on his imagination, I need not remind the readers of *Marmion* and the *Eve of St. John*. On the summit of the Craggs which overhang the farmhouse, stands the ruined tower of Smailholme, the scene of that fine ballad; and the view from thence takes in a wide expanse

of the district in which, as has been truly said, every field has its battle, and every rivulet its song:—

“The lady looked in mournful mood,  
Looked over hill and vale,  
O'er Mertoun's wood, and Tweed's fair flood,  
And all down Teviotdale.”—

Mertoun, the principal seat of the Harden family, with its noble groves; nearly in front of it, across the Tweed, Les-sudden; the comparatively small but still venerable and stately abode of the Lairds of Raeburn; and the hoary Abbey of Dryburgh, surrounded with yew-trees as ancient as itself, seem to lie almost below the feet of the spectator. Opposite him rise the purple peaks of Eildon, the traditional scene of Thomas the Rymer's interview with the Queen of Faerie; behind are the blasted peel which the seer of Erceldoun himself inhabited, “the Broom of the Cowdenknowes”, the pastoral valley of the Leader, and the bleak wilderness of Lammermoor. To the eastward the desolate grandeur of Hume Castle breaks the horizon, as the eye travels towards the range of the Cheviot. A few miles westward, Melrose, “like some tall rock with lichens gray”, appears clasped amidst the windings of the Tweed; and the distance presents the serrated mountains of the Gala, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow, all famous in song. Such were the objects that had painted the earliest images on the eye of the last and greatest of the Border Minstrels.

As his memory reached to an earlier period of childhood than that of almost any other person, so assuredly no poet has given to the world a picture of the dawning feelings of life and genius, at once so simple, so beautiful, and so complete, as that of his epistle to William Erskine, the chief literary confidant and counsellor of his prime of manhood.

“Whether an impulse that has birth  
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,  
One with our feelings and our powers,  
And rather part of us than ours;  
Or whether fittier term'd the sway  
Of habit, formed in early day,

Howe'er derived, its force contest  
Rules with despotic sway the breast  
And drags us on by viewless chain,  
While taste and reason plead in vain. . . .  
Thus, while I ape the measure wild  
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,  
Rude though they be, still with the chime  
Return the thoughts of early time,  
And feelings rous'd in life's first day,  
Glow in the line and prompt the lay.  
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower  
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.  
It was a barren scene and wild  
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;  
But ever and anon between  
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;  
And well the lonely infant knew  
Recesses where the wall-flower grew  
And honey-suckle loved to crawl  
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.  
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade  
The sun in all its round surveyed;  
And still I thought that shattered tower  
The mightiest work of human power,  
And marvelled as the aged hind,  
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,  
Of forayers who, with headlong force,  
Down from that strength had spur'd their horse,  
Their southern rapine to renew,  
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,  
And home returning, fill'd the hall  
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.  
Methought that still with trump and clang  
The gateway's broken arches rang;  
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,  
Glared through the windows' rusty bars;  
And eye, by the winter hearth,  
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,  
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,  
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms—  
Of patriot battles won of old  
By Wallace Wight and Bruce the Bold—  
Of later fields of feud and fight,  
When, pouring from their Highland height,



The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,  
 Had swept the scarlet ranks away.  
 While stretched at length upon the floor,  
 Again I fought each combat o'er,  
 Pebbles and shells, in order laid,  
 The mimic ranks of war displayed,  
 And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,  
 And still the scattered Southron fled before.'

There are still living in that neighbourhood two old women, who were in the domestic service of Sandy-Knowe, when the lame child was brought thither in the third year of his age. One of them, Tibby Hunter, remembers his coming well; and that "he was a sweet-tempered bairn, a darling with all about the house". The young ewemilkers delighted, she says, to carry him about on their backs among the crags; and he was "very gleg (quick) at the uptake, and soon kenned every sheep and lamb by head-mark as well as any of them." His great pleasure, however, was in the society of the "aged hind," recorded in the epistle to Erskine. "Auld Sandy Ormistoun," called, from the most dignified part of his function, "the Cow-bailie", had the chief superintendence of the flocks that browsed upon "the velvet tufts of loveliest green". If the child saw him in the morning, he could not be satisfied unless the old man would set him astride on his shoulder, and take him to keep him company as he lay watching his charge.

"Here was poetic impulse given  
 By the green hill and clear blue heaven."

The Cow-bailie blew a particular note on his whistle, which signified to the maid-servants in the house below when the little boy wished to be carried home again. He told his friend, Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, when spending a summer day in his old age among these well-remembered crags, that he delighted to roll about on the grass all day long in the midst of the flock, and that "the sort of fellowship he thus formed with the sheep and lambs had impressed his mind with a degree of affectionate feeling towards them which had lasted throughout life." There is a story of his having been forgotten one day

among the knolls when a thunder-storm came on; and his aunt, suddenly recollecting his situation, and running out to bring him home, is said to have found him lying on his back, clapping his hands at the lightning, and crying out, "Bonny, bonny!" at every flash.

I find the following marginal note on his copy of Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* (edition 1724): "This book belonged to my grandfather, Robert Scott, and out of it I was taught Hardiknute by heart before I could read the ballad myself. It was the first poem I ever learnt—the last I shall ever forget." According to Tibby Hunter, he was not particularly fond of his book, embracing every pretext for joining his friend the Cow-bailie out of doors; but "Miss Jenny was a grand hand at keeping him to the bit, and by degrees he came to read brawly." An early acquaintance of a higher class, Mrs. Duncan, the wife of the present excellent minister of Mertoun, informs me, that though she was younger than Sir Walter, she has a dim remembrance of the interior of Sandy-Knowe—"Old Mrs. Scott sitting, with her spinning-wheel, at one side of the fire, in a *clean clean* parlour; the grandfather, a good deal failed, in his elbow-chair opposite; and the little boy lying on the carpet, at the old man's feet, listening to the Bible, or whatever good book Miss Jenny was reading to them."

Robert Scott died before his grandson was four years of age; and I heard him mention when he was an old man that he distinctly remembered the writing and sealing of the funeral letters, and all the ceremonial of the melancholy procession as it left Sandy-Knowe. I shall conclude my notices of the residence at Sandy-Knowe with observing, that in Sir Walter's account of the friendly clergyman who so often sat at his grandfather's fireside, we cannot fail to trace many features of the secluded divine in the novel of *Saint Ronan's Well*.

I have nothing to add to what he has told us of that excursion to England which interrupted his residence at Sandy-Knowe for about a twelvemonth, except that I had often been astonished, long before I read his autobiographic fragment, with the minute recollection he seemed to possess of all the

striking features of the city of Bath, which he had never seen again since he quitted it before he was six years of age. He has himself alluded in his Memoir, to the lively recollection he retained of his first visit to the theatre, to which his uncle Robert carried him to witness a representation of *As You Like It*. In his *Review of the Life of John Kemble*, written in 1826, he has recorded that impression more fully, and in terms so striking, that I must copy them in this place:—

“There are few things which those gifted with any degree of imagination recollect with a sense of more anxious and mysterious delight than the first dramatic representation which they have witnessed. The unusual form of the house, filled with such groups of crowded spectators, themselves forming an extraordinary spectacle to the eye which has never witnessed it before, yet all intent upon that wide and mystic curtain, whose dusky undulations permit us now and then to discern the momentary glitter of some gaudy form, or the spangles of some sandalled foot, which trips lightly within: then the light, brilliant as that of day: then the music, which, in itself a treat sufficient in every other situation, our inexperience mistakes for the very play we came to witness; then the slow rise of the shadowy curtain, disclosing as if by actual magic, a new land, with woods, and mountains, and lakes, lighted, it seems to us, by another sun, and inhabited by a race of beings different from ourselves, whose language is poetry—whose dress, demeanour, and sentiments seem something supernatural,—and whose whole actions and discourse are calculated not for the ordinary tone of every-day life, but to excite the stronger and more powerful faculties—to melt with sorrow, overpower with terror, astonish with the marvellous, or convulse with irresistible laughter:—all these wonders stamp indelible impressions on the memory. Those mixed feelings also, which perplex us between a sense that the scene is but a plaything, and an interest which ever and anon surprises us into a transient belief that that which so strongly affects us cannot be fictitious; those mixed and puzzling feelings, also, are exciting in the highest degree. Then there are the bursts of applause, like

distant thunder, and the permission afforded to clap our little hands, and add our own scream of delight to a sound so commanding. All this, and much, much more, is fresh in our memory, although, when we felt these sensations, we looked on the stage which Garrick had not yet left. It is now a long while since; yet we have not passed many hours of such unmixed delight, and we still remember the sinking lights, the dispersing crowd, with the vain longings which we felt that the music would again sound, the magic curtain once more arise, and the enchanting dream recommence; and the astonishment with which we looked upon the apathy of the elder part of our company, who, having the means, did not spend every evening in the theatre."<sup>1</sup>

Probably it was this performance that first tempted him to open the page of Shakespeare. Before he returned to Sandy-Knowe, assuredly, notwithstanding the modest language of his autobiography, the progress which had been made in his intellectual education was extraordinary; and it is impossible to doubt that his hitherto almost sole tutoress, Miss Jenny Scott, must have been a woman of tastes and acquirements very far above what could have been often found among Scotch ladies, of any but the highest class at least, in that day. In the winter of 1777, she and her charge spent some few weeks—not happy weeks, the *Memoir* hints them to have been—in George's Square, Edinburgh; and it so happened, that during this little interval, Mr. and Mrs. Scott received in their domestic circle a guest capable of appreciating, and, fortunately for us, of recording in a very striking manner the remarkable development of young Walter's faculties. Mrs. Cockburn, mentioned by him in his *Memoir* as the authoress of the modern "Flowers of the Forest," born a Rutherford, of Fairnalie, in Selkirkshire, was distantly related to the poet's mother, with whom she had through life been in habits of intimate friendship. This accomplished woman was staying at Ravelstone, in the vicinity of Edinburgh, a seat of the Keiths of Dunnotar, nearly related to Mrs. Scott, and to herself. With some of that

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xx. p. 154.

family she spent an evening in George's Square. She chanced to be writing next day to Dr. Douglas, the well-known and much-respected minister of her native parish, Galashiels; and her letter, of which the Doctor's son has kindly given me a copy, contains the following passage:—

“Edinburgh, Saturday night, 15th of ‘the gloomy month when  
‘the people of England hang and drown themselves.’

“I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. ‘There's the mast gone,’ says he; ‘crash it goes—they will all perish!’ After his agitation, he turns to me. ‘That is too melancholy,’ says he; ‘I had better read you something more amusing.’ I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully. One of his observations was, ‘How strange it is that Adam, just new come into the world, should know everything—that must be the poet's fancy,’ says he. But when he was told he was created perfect by God, he instantly yielded. When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady. ‘What lady?’ says she. ‘Why, Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she is a virtuoso like myself.’ ‘Dear Walter,’ says Aunt Jenny, ‘what is a virtuoso?’ ‘Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know everything.’<sup>1</sup>—Now, sir, you

<sup>1</sup> It may amuse my reader to recall, by the side of Scott's early definition of “a Virtuoso”, the lines in which Akenside has painted that character—lines which might have been written for a description of the Author of *Waverley*:—

“He knew the various modes of ancient times,  
Their arts and fashions of each various guise;  
Their weddings, funerals, punishments of crimes;  
Their strength, their learning eke, and rarities.  
Of old habiliment, each sort and size,  
Male, female, high and low, to him were known;  
Each gladiator's dress, and stage disguise,  
With learned clerkly phrase he could have shown.”

will think this a very silly story. Pray what age do you suppose this boy to be? Name it now, before I tell you. Why, twelve or fourteen. No such thing; he is not quite six years old. He has a lame leg, for which he was a year at Bath, and has acquired the perfect English accent, which he has not lost since he came, and he reads like a Garrick. You will allow this an uncommon exotic."

Some particulars in Mrs. Cockburn's account appear considerably at variance with what Sir Walter has told us respecting his own boyish proficiency—especially in the article of pronunciation. On that last head, however, Mrs. Cockburn was not, probably, a very accurate judge; all that can be said is, that if at this early period he had acquired anything which could be justly described as an English accent, he soon lost, and never again recovered, what he had thus gained from his short residence at Bath. In after life his pronunciation of words, considered separately, was seldom much different from that of a well-educated Englishman of his time; but he used many words in a sense which belonged to Scotland, not to England; and the tone and accent remained broadly Scotch, though, unless in the *burr*, which no doubt smacked of the country bordering on Northumberland, there was no *provincial* peculiarity about his utterance. He had strong powers of mimicry—could talk with a peasant quite in his own style, and frequently in general society introduced rustic *patois*, northern, southern, or midland, with great truth and effect; but these things were inlaid dramatically, or playfully, upon his narrative. His exquisite taste in this matter was not less remarkable in his conversation than in the prose of his Scotch novels.

Another lady, nearly connected with the Keiths of Ravelstone, has a lively recollection of young Walter, when paying a visit much about the same period to his kind relation, the mistress of that picturesque old mansion, which furnished him in after days with many of the features of his Tully-Veolan, and whose venerable gardens, with their massive hedges of yew and holly, he always considered as the ideal of the art. The

lady, whose letter I have now before me, says she distinctly remembers the sickly boy sitting at the gate of the house with his attendant, when a poor mendicant approached, old and woebegone, to claim the charity which none asked for in vain at Ravelstone. When the man was retiring, the servant remarked to Walter that he ought to be thankful to Providence for having placed him above the want and misery he had been contemplating. The child looked up with a half wistful, half incredulous expression, and said, "*Homer was a beggar!*" "How do you know that?" said the other. "Why, don't you remember," answered the little Virtuoso, "that

'Seven Roman cities strove for Homer dead,  
Through which the living Homer begged his bread?'"

The lady smiled at the "*Roman cities*",—but already

"Each blank in faithless memory void  
The poet's glowing thought supplied."

It was in this same year, 1777, that he spent some time at Prestonpans; made his first acquaintance with George Constable, the original of his Monkbarns; explored the field where Colonel Gardiner received his death-wound, under the learned guidance of Dalgetty; and marked the spot "where the grass grew long and green, distinguishing it from the rest of the field," above the grave of poor Balmawhapple.

His uncle Thomas, whom I have described as I saw him in extreme old age at Monklaw, had the management of the farm affairs at Sandy-Knowe, when Walter returned thither from Prestonpans; he was a kind-hearted man, and very fond of the child. Appearing on his return somewhat strengthened, his uncle promoted him from the Cow-bailie's shoulder to a dwarf of the Shetland race, not so large as many a Newfoundland dog. This creature walked freely into the house, and was regularly fed from the boy's hand. He soon learned to sit her well, and often alarmed Aunt Jenny by cantering over the rough places about the tower. In the evening of his life, when he had a grandchild afflicted with an infirmity akin to his own,

he provided him with a little mare of the same breed, and gave her the name of *Marion*, in memory of this early favourite.

The report of Walter's progress in horsemanship probably reminded his father that it was time he should be learning other things beyond the department either of Aunt Jenny or Uncle Thomas, and after a few months he was recalled to Edinburgh. But extraordinary as was the progress he had by this time made in that self-education which alone is of primary consequence to spirits of his order, he was found too deficient in lesser matters to be at once entered in the High School. Probably his mother dreaded, and deferred as long as she could, the day when he should be exposed to the rude collision of a crowd of boys. At all events, he was placed first in a little private school kept by one Leechman in Bristo-Port; and then, that experiment not answering expectation, under the domestic tutorage of Mr. James French, afterwards minister of East Kilbride in Lanarkshire. This respectable man considered him fit to join Luke Fraser's class in October, 1778.

His own account of his progress at this excellent seminary is, on the whole, very similar to what I have received from some of his surviving school-fellows. His quick apprehension and powerful memory enabled him, at little cost of labour, to perform the usual routine of tasks, in such a manner as to keep him generally "in a decent place" (so he once expressed it to Mr. Skene) "about the middle of the class; with which," he continued, "I was the better contented, that it chanced to be near the fire."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fraser was, I believe, more zealous in enforcing attention to the technicalities of grammar, than to excite curiosity about historical facts, or imagination to strain after the flights of a poet. There is no evidence that Scott, though he speaks of him as his "kind master", in remembrance probably of sympathy for his physical infirmities, ever attracted his special notice with reference to scholarship; but Adam,

<sup>1</sup> According to Mr. Irving's recollections, Scott's place, after the first winter, was usually between the 7th and the 15th from the top of the class. He adds, "Dr. James Buchan was always the *dux*; David Douglas (Lord (Reston) *second*; and the present Lord Melville *third*"



the rector, into whose class he passed in October, 1782, was, as his situation demanded, a teacher of a more liberal caste; and though never, even under his guidance, did Walter fix and concentrate his ambition so as to maintain an eminent place, still the vivacity of his talents was observed, and the readiness of his memory in particular was so often displayed, that (as Mr. Irving, his chosen friend of that day, informs me) the doctor "would constantly refer to him for dates, the particulars of battles, and other remarkable events alluded to in Horace, or whatever author the boys were reading, and used to call him the historian of the class." No one who has read, as few have not, Dr. Adam's interesting work on Roman Antiquities, will doubt the author's capacity for stimulating such a mind as young Scott's.

He speaks of himself as occasionally "glancing like a meteor from the bottom to the top of the form." His school-fellow, Mr. Claud Russell, remembers that he once made a great leap in consequence of the stupidity of some laggard on what is called the *dolt's* (dolt's) bench, who being asked, on boggling at *cum*, "what part of speech is *with*?" answered, "*a substantive*." The rector, after a moment's pause, thought it worth while to ask his *dux*—"Is *with* ever a substantive?" but all were silent until the query reached Scott, then near the bottom of the class, who instantly responded by quoting a verse of the book of Judges:—"And Samson said unto Delilah, If they bind me with seven green *withs* that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and as another man." Another upward movement, accomplished in a less laudable manner, but still one strikingly illustrative of his ingenious resources, I am enabled to preserve through the kindness of a brother poet and esteemed friend, to whom Sir Walter himself communicated it in the melancholy twilight of his bright day.

Mr. Rogers says—"Sitting one day alone with him in your house, in the Regent's Park—(it was the day but one before he left it to embark at Portsmouth for Malta)—I led him, among other things, to tell me once again a story of himself, which he had formerly told me, and which I had often wished

to recover. When I returned home, I wrote it down as nearly as I could, in his own words; and here they are. The subject is an achievement worthy of Ulysses himself, and such as many of his school-fellows could, no doubt, have related of him; but I fear I have done it no justice, though the story is so very characteristic that it should not be lost. The inimitable manner in which he told it—the glance of the eye, the turn of the head, and the light that played over his faded features, as, one by one, the circumstances came back to him, accompanied by a thousand boyish feelings, that had slept, perhaps, for years—there is no language, not even his own, could convey to you; but you can supply them. Would that others could do so, who had not the good fortune to know him!—The memorandum (Friday, October 21, 1831) is as follows:—

“There was a boy in my class at school, who stood always at the top,<sup>1</sup> nor could I with all my efforts supplant him. Day came after day, and still he kept his place, do what I would: till at length I observed that, when a question was asked him, he always fumbled with his fingers at a particular button in the lower part of his waistcoat. To remove it, therefore, became expedient in my eyes; and in an evil moment it was removed with a knife. Great was my anxiety to know the success of my measure; and it succeeded too well. When the boy was again questioned, his fingers sought again for the button, but it was not to be found. In his distress he looked down for it; it was to be seen no more than to be felt. He stood confounded, and I took possession of his place; nor did he ever recover it, or ever, I believe, suspect who was the author of his wrong. Often in after-life has the sight of him smote me as I passed by him; and often have I resolved to make him some reparation; but it ended in good resolutions. Though I never renewed my acquaintance with him, I often saw him, for he filled some inferior office in one of the courts

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Irving inclines to think that this incident must have occurred during Scott's attendance on Luke Fraser, not after he went to Dr. Adam; and he also suspects that the boy referred to sat at the top, not of the class, but of Scott's own bench or division of the class.

of law at Edinburgh. Poor fellow! I believe he is dead; he took early to drinking."

The autobiography tells us that his translations in verse from Horace and Virgil were often approved by Dr. Adam. One of these little pieces, written in a weak boyish scrawl, within pencilled marks still visible, had been carefully preserved by his mother; it was found folded up in a cover inscribed by the old lady—"My Walter's first lines, 1782."

"In awful ruins Ætna thunders nigh,  
And sends in pitchy whirlwinds to the sky  
Black clouds of smoke, which, still as they aspire,  
From their dark sides there bursts the glowing fire;  
At other times huge balls of fire are toss'd,  
That lick the stars, and in the smoke are lost:  
Sometimes the mount, with vast convulsions torn,  
Emits huge rocks, which instantly are borne  
With loud explosions to the starry skies,  
The stones made liquid as the huge mass flies,  
Then back again with greater weight recoils,  
While Ætna thundering from the bottom boils."

I gather from Mr. Irving that these lines were considered as the second best set of those produced on the occasion—Colin Mackenzie of Portmore, through life Scott's dear friend, carrying off the premium.

In his introduction to the "Lay", he alludes to an original effusion of these "schoolboy days," prompted by a thunderstorm, which he says "was much approved of, until a malevolent critic sprung up in the shape of an apothecary's blue-buskined wife, who affirmed that my most sweet poetry was copied from an old magazine. I never," he continues, "forgave the imputation, and even now I acknowledge some resentment against the poor woman's memory. She, indeed, accused me unjustly, when she said I had stolen my poem ready made; but as I had, like most premature poets, copied all the words and ideas of which my verses consisted, she was so far right. I made one or two faint attempts at verse after I had undergone this sort of daw-plucking at the hands of the apothecary's wife, but some friend or other always advised me

to put my verses into the fire; and, like Dorax, in the play, I submitted, though with a swelling heart." These lines, and another short piece "On the Setting Sun," were lately found wrapped up in a cover, inscribed by Dr. Adam, "Walter Scott, July, 1783," and have been kindly transmitted to me by the gentleman who discovered them.

"ON A THUNDER-STORM.

"Loud o'er my head though awful thunders roll,  
And vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole,  
Yet 'tis thy voice, my God, that bids them fly,  
Thy arm directs those lightnings through the sky.  
Then let the good thy mighty name revere,  
And hardened sinners thy just vengeance fear."

"ON THE SETTING SUN.

"Those evening clouds, that setting ray  
And beauteous tints, serve to display  
Their great Creator's praise;  
Then let the short-lived thing call'd man,  
Whose life's comprised within a span,  
To Him his homage raise.

"We often praise the evening clouds,  
And tints so gay and bold,  
But seldom think upon our God,  
Who tinged these clouds with gold!"

It must, I think, be allowed that these lines, though of the class to which the poet himself modestly ascribes them, and not to be compared with the efforts of Pope, still less of Cowley at the same period, show, nevertheless, praiseworthy dexterity for a boy of twelve.

The fragment tells us, that on the whole he was "more distinguished in the *Yards* (as the High School playground was called), than in the *class*;" and this, not less than the intellectual advancement which years before had excited the admiration of Mrs. Cockburn, was the natural result of his lifelong "rebellion against external circumstances." He might now, with very slender exertion, have been the *dux* of his form; but if there was more difficulty, there was also more to whet his ambition,

in the attempt to overcome the disadvantages of his physical misfortune, and in spite of them assert equality with the best of his compeers on the ground which they considered as the true arena of honour. He told me, in walking through these same yards forty years afterwards, that he had scarcely made his first appearance there, before some dispute arising, his opponent remarked that "there was no use to hargle-bargle with a cripple;" upon which he replied, that if he might fight mounted, he would try his hand with any one of his inches. "An elder boy," said he, "who had perhaps been chuckling over our friend Roderick Random when his mother supposed him to be in full cry after Pyrrhus or Porus, suggested that the two little tinklers might be lashed front to front upon a deal board—and—'O gran bonta de' cavalier antichi'—the proposal being forthwith agreed to, I received my first bloody nose in an attitude which would have entitled me, in the blessed days of personal cognizances, to assume that of a *lioncel seiant gules*. My pugilistic trophies here," he continued, "were all the results of such *sittings in banco*." Considering his utter ignorance of fear, the strength of his chest and upper limbs, and that the scientific part of pugilism never flourished in Scotland, I daresay those trophies were not few.

The mettle of the High-School boys, however, was principally displayed elsewhere than in their own yards; and Sir Walter has furnished us with ample indications of the delight with which he found himself at length capable of rivalling others in such achievements as required the exertion of active locomotive powers. Speaking of some scene of his infancy in one of his latest tales, he says—"Every step of the way after I have passed through the green already mentioned" (probably the Meadows behind George's Square), "has for me something of an early remembrance. There is the stile at which I can recollect a cross child's-maid upbraiding me with my infirmity as she lifted me coarsely and carelessly over the flinty steps which my brothers traversed with shout and bound. I remember the *suppressed bitterness* of the moment, and, conscious of my own infirmity, the envy with which I regarded the easy

movements and elastic steps of my more happily-formed brethren. "Alas!" he adds, "these goodly barks have all perished in life's wide ocean, and only that which seemed, as the naval phrase goes, so little sea-worthy, has reached the port when the tempest is over." How touching to compare with this passage, that in which he records his pride in being found, before he left the High School, one of the boldest and nimblest climbers of "the kittle nine stanes," a passage of difficulty which might puzzle a chamois-hunter of the Alps, its steps "few and far between", projected high in air from the precipitous black granite of the Castle rock. But climbing and fighting could sometimes be combined, and he has in almost the same page dwelt upon perhaps the most favourite of all these juvenile exploits—namely, "the manning of the Cowgate Port,"—in the season when snowballs could be employed by the young scorers of discipline for the annoyance of the Town-guard. To understand fully the feelings of a High-School boy of that day with regard to those ancient Highlanders, who then formed the only police of the city of Edinburgh, the reader must consult the poetry of the scapegrace Ferguson. It was in defiance of their Lochaber axes that the Cowgate Port was manned—and many were the occasions on which its defence presented a formidable mimicry of warfare. "The gateway," Sir Walter adds, "is now demolished, and probably most of its garrison lie as low as the fortress! To recollect that I, however naturally disqualified, was one of these juvenile dreadnoughts, is a sad reflection for one who cannot now step over a brook without assistance."

I am unwilling to swell this narrative by extracts from Scott's published works, but there is one juvenile exploit told in the General Preface to the *Waverley Novels*, which I must crave leave to introduce here in his own language, because it is essentially necessary to complete our notion of his schoolboy life and character. "It is well known," he says, "that there is little boxing at the Scottish schools. About forty or fifty years ago, however, a far more dangerous mode of fighting, in parties or factions, was permitted in the streets of Edinburgh,

to the great disgrace of the police, and danger of the parties concerned. These parties were generally formed from the quarters of the town in which the combatants resided, those of a particular square or district fighting against those of an adjoining one. Hence it happened that the children of the higher classes were often pitted against those of the lower, each taking their side according to the residence of their friends. So far as I recollect, however, it was unmingled either with feelings of democracy or aristocracy, or indeed with malice or ill-will of any kind towards the opposite party. In fact, it was only a rough mode of play. Such contests were, however, maintained with great vigour with stones, and sticks, and fisticuffs, when one party dared to charge, and the other stood their ground. Of course, mischief sometimes happened; boys are said to have been killed at these *Bickers*, as they were called, and serious accidents certainly took place, as many contemporaries can bear witness.

"The author's father residing in George's Square, in the southern side of Edinburgh, the boys belonging to that family, with others in the square, were arranged into a sort of company, to which a lady of distinction presented a handsome set of colours. Now, this company or regiment, as a matter of course, was engaged in weekly warfare with the boys inhabiting the Crosscauseway, Bristo Street, Potterrow—in short, the neighbouring suburbs. These last were chiefly of the lower rank, but hardy loons, who thrōw stones to a hair's-breadth, and were very rugged antagonists at close quarters. The skirmish sometimes lasted for a whole evening, until one party or the other was victorious, when, if ours were successful, we drove the enemy to their quarters, and were usually chased back by the reinforcement of bigger lads who came to their assistance. If, on the contrary, we were pursued, as was often the case, into the precincts of our square, we were in our turn supported by our elder brothers, domestic servants, and similar auxiliaries. It followed, from our frequent opposition to each other, that, though not knowing the names of our enemies, we were yet well acquainted with their appearance,

and had nicknames for the most remarkable of them. One very active and spirited boy might be considered as the principal leader in the cohort of the suburbs. He was, I suppose, thirteen or fourteen years old, finely made, tall, blue-eyed, with long fair hair, the very picture of a youthful Goth. This lad was always first in the charge, and last in the retreat—the Achilles at once and Ajax of the Crosscauseway. He was too formidable to us not to have a cognomen, and, like that of a knight of old, it was taken from the most remarkable part of his dress, being a pair of old green livery breeches, which was the principal part of his clothing; for, like Pentapolin, according to Don Quixote's account, Green-breeks, as we called him, always entered the battle with bare arms, legs, and feet.

“It fell, that once upon a time when the combat was at its thickest, this plebeian champion headed a charge so rapid and furious, that all fled before him. He was several paces before his comrades, and had actually laid his hands upon the patrician standard, when one of our party, whom some misjudging friend had intrusted with a *couteau de chasse*, or hanger, inspired with a zeal for the honour of the corps, worthy of Major Sturgeon himself, struck poor Green-breeks over the head, with strength sufficient to cut him down. When this was seen, the casualty was so far beyond what had ever taken place before, that both parties fled different ways, leaving poor Green-breeks, with his bright hair plentifully dabbled in blood, to the care of the watchman, who (honest man) took care not to know who had done the mischief. The bloody hanger was thrown into one of the Meadow ditches, and solemn secrecy was sworn on all hands; but the remorse and terror of the actor were beyond all bounds, and his apprehensions of the most dreadful character. The wounded hero was for a few days in the Infirmary, the case being only a trifling one. But though inquiry was strongly pressed on him, no argument could make him indicate the person from whom he had received the wound, though he must have been perfectly well known to him. When he recovered and was dismissed,



the author and his brothers opened a communication with him, through the medium of a popular gingerbread baker, of whom both parties were customers, in order to tender a subsidy in the name of smart-money. The sum would excite ridicule were I to name it; but sure I am, that the pockets of the noted Green-breeks never held as much money of his own. He declined the remittance, saying that he would not sell his blood; but at the same time reprobated the idea of being an informer, which he said was *clam*, i.e. base or mean. With much urgency, he accepted a pound of snuff for the use of some old woman—aunt, grandmother, or the like—with whom he lived. We did not become friends, for the *bickers* were more agreeable to both parties than any more pacific amusement; but we conducted them, ever after, under mutual assurances of the highest consideration for each other." Sir Walter adds—"Of five brothers, all healthy and promising in a degree far beyond one whose infancy was visited by personal infirmity, and whose health after this period seemed long very precarious, I am, nevertheless, the only survivor. The best loved, and the best deserving to be loved, who had destined this incident to be the foundation of a literary composition, died 'before his day', in a distant and foreign land; and trifles assume an importance not their own, when connected with those who have been loved and lost."

During some part of his attendance on the High School, young Walter spent one hour daily at a small separate seminary of writing and arithmetic, kept by one Morton, where, as was, and I suppose continues to be, the custom of Edinburgh, young girls came for instruction as well as boys; and one of Mr. Morton's female pupils has been kind enough to set down some little reminiscences of Scott, who happened to sit at the same desk with herself. They appear to me the more interesting because the lady had no acquaintance with him in the course of his subsequent life. Her nephew, Mr. James (the accomplished author of *Richelieu*), to whose friendship I owe her communication, assures me too that he had constantly heard her tell the same things in the very same way, as far

back as his own memory reaches, many years before he had ever seen Sir Walter, or his aunt could have dreamt of surviving to assist in the biography of his early days.

"He attracted," Mrs. Churnside says, "the regard and fondness of all his companions, for he was ever rational, fanciful, lively, and possessed of that urbane gentleness of manner which makes its way to the heart. His imagination was constantly at work, and he often so engrossed the attention of those who learnt with him that little could be done—Mr. Morton himself being forced to laugh as much as the little scholars at the odd turns and devices he fell upon; for he did nothing in the ordinary way, but, for example, even when he wanted ink to his pen, would get up some ludicrous story about sending his doggie to the mill again. He used also to interest us in a more serious way by telling us the *visions*, as he called them, which he had lying alone on the floor or sofa, when kept from going to church on a Sunday by ill health. Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen—his misty and sublime sketches of the regions above, which he had visited in his trance. Recollecting these descriptions, radiant and not gloomy as they were, I have often thought since that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition—the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humour, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital. . . . I may add, that in walking he used always to keep his eyes turned downwards as if thinking, but with a pleasing expression of countenance, as if enjoying his thoughts. Having once known him, it was impossible ever to forget him. In this manner, after all the changes of a long life, he constantly appears as fresh as yesterday to my mind's eye."

This beautiful extract needs no commentary. I may as well, however, bear witness, that exactly as the schoolboy still

walks before "her mind's eye", his image rises familiarly to mine, who never saw him until he was past the middle of life; that I trace in every feature of her delineation, the same gentleness of aspect and demeanour which the presence of the female sex, whether in silk or in russet, ever commanded in the man; and that her description of the change on his countenance when passing from the "doggie of the mill" to the dream of Paradise, is a perfect picture of what no one that has heard him recite a fragment of high poetry, in the course of table talk, can ever forget. 'Strangers may catch some notion of what fondly dwells on the memory of every friend, by glancing from the conversational bust of Chantrey to the first portrait by Raeburn, which represents the Last Minstrel as musing in his prime within sight of Hermitage.

## LEIGH HUNT.

[Leigh Hunt, the son of a clergyman connected with the West Indies, was born at Southgate, Middlesex, in 1784, and through the first half of our century was well known as the poet and essayist whose unworldliness has been so harshly caricatured under the name of "Skimpole" in *Bleak House*. He took to authorship very early, publishing a first volume of poems in his teens. His juvenile recollections are somewhat too discursive to be given here in full; but we have extracted so much of them as relates to his school-days at Christ Hospital.]

The children's books in those days were Hogarth's pictures taken in their most literal acceptation. Every good boy was to ride in his coach, and be a lord mayor; and every bad boy was to be hung, or eaten by lions. The gingerbread was gilt, and the books were gilt like the gingerbread—a "take in" the more gross, inasmuch as nothing could be plainer or less dazzling than the books of the same boys when they grew a little older. There was a lingering old ballad or so in favour of the gallanter apprentices who tore out lions' hearts and astonished gazing sultans; and in antiquarian corners, Percy's *Reliques* were preparing a nobler age, both in poetry and prose. But the first counteraction came, as it ought, in the shape of a new book for children. The pool of mercenary and time-serving ethics was first blown over by the fresh country breeze of Mr. Day's *Sandford and Merton*—a production that I well remember, and shall ever be grateful to. It came in aid of my mother's perplexities between delicacy and hardihood, between courage and conscientiousness. It assisted the cheerfulness I inherited from my father; showed me that circumstances were not to crush a healthy gaiety, or the most masculine self-respect; and helped to supply me with the resolution of standing by a principle, not merely as a point of lowly or lofty sacrifice, but as a matter of common sense and duty, and a simple co-operation with the elements of natural welfare.

I went, nevertheless, to school at Christ Hospital, an ultra-sympathizing and timid boy.<sup>1</sup> The sight of boys fighting, from which I had been so anxiously withheld, frightened me as something devilish; and the least threat of corporal chastisement to a schoolfellow (for the lesson I had learned would have enabled me to bear it myself) affected me to tears. I remember to this day, merely on that account, the name of a boy who was to receive punishment for some offence about a task. It was Lemoine. (I hereby present him with my respects, if he is an existing old gentleman, and hope he has not lost a pleasing countenance.) He had a cold and hoarseness; and his voice, while pleading in mitigation, sounded to me so pathetic, that I wondered how the master could have the heart to strike him.

Readers who have been at a public school may guess the consequence. I was not of a disposition to give offence, but neither was I quick to take it; and this, to the rude, energy-cultivating spirit of boys in general (not the worst thing in the world, till the pain in preparation for them can be diminished), was in itself an offence. I therefore "went to the wall", till address, and the rousing of my own spirit, tended to right me; but I went through a great deal of fear in the process. I became convinced, that if I did not put moral courage in the place of personal, or, in other words, undergo any stubborn amount of pain and wretchedness, rather than submit to what I thought wrong, there was an end for ever, as far as I was concerned, of all those fine things that had been taught me, in vindication of right and justice.

Whether it was, however, that by the help of animal spirits I possessed some portion of the courage for which the rest of the family was remarkable—or whether I was a veritable coward, born or bred, destined to show, in my person, how far a spirit of love and freedom could supersede the necessity of gall, and procure me the respect of those about me,—certain it is, that although, except in one instance, I did my best to avoid, and succeeded honourably in avoiding, those personal

<sup>1</sup> In 1792.

encounters with my school-fellows, which, in confronting me on my own account with the face of a fellow-creature, threw me upon a sense of something devilish, and overwhelmed me with a sort of terror for both parties, yet I gained at an early period of boyhood the reputation of a romantic enthusiast, whose daring in behalf of a friend, or a good cause nothing could put down. I was obliged to call in the aid of a feeling apart from my own sense of personal antagonism, and so merge the diabolical, as it were, into the human. In other words, I had not self-respect or gall enough to be angry on my own account, unless there was something at stake which, by concerning others, gave me a sense of support, and so pieced out my want with their abundance. The moment, however, that I felt thus supported, not only did all misgiving vanish from my mind, but contempt of pain took possession of my body; and my poor mother might have gloried through her tears in the loving courage of her son.

I state the case thus proudly, both in justice to the manner in which she trained me, and because I conceive it may do good. I never fought with a boy but once, and then it was on my own account; but though I beat him I was frightened, and eagerly sought his good-will. I dared everything, however, from the biggest and strongest boys on other accounts, and was sometimes afforded an opportunity of showing my spirit of martyrdom. The truth is, I could suffer better than act; for the utmost activity of martyrdom is supported by a certain sense of passiveness. We are not bold from ourselves, but from something which compels us to be so, and which supports us by a sense of the necessity.

I had not been long in the school, when this spirit within me broke out in a manner that procured me great esteem. There was a monitor or "big boy in office," who had a trick of entertaining himself by pelting lesser boys' heads with a hard ball. He used to throw it at this boy and that; make the *thrower* bring it back to him; and then send a rap with it on his cerebellum, as he was going off.

I had borne this spectacle one day for some time, when the

family precepts rising within me, I said to myself, "I must go up to the monitor and speak to him about this." I issued forth accordingly, and to the astonishment of all present, who had never witnessed such an act of insubordination, I said, "You have no right to do this." The monitor, more astounded than anyone, exclaimed, "What?" I repeated my remonstrance. He treated me with the greatest contempt, as if disdaining even to strike me; and finished by ordering me to "stand out". "Standing out" meant going to a particular spot in the hall where we dined. I did so; but just as the steward (the master in that place) was entering it, the monitor called to me to come away; and I neither heard any more of standing out, nor saw any more of the balt. I do not recollect that he even "spited" me afterwards, which must have been thought very remarkable. I seemed fairly to have taken away the breath of his calculations. The probability is, that he was a good lad who had got a bad habit. Boys often become tyrants from a notion of its being grand and manly.

Another monitor, a year or two afterwards, took it into his head to force me to be his fag. Fag was not the term at our school, though it was in our vocabulary. Fag, with us, meant catables. The learned derived the word from the Greek *phago*, to eat. I had so little objection to serve out of love, that there is no office I could not have performed for good-will; but it had been given out that I had determined not to be a menial on any other terms, and the monitor in question undertook to bring me to reason. He was a mild, good-looking boy about fourteen, remarkable for the neatness, and even elegance, of his appearance.

Receiving the refusal, for which he had been prepared, he showed me a knot in a long handkerchief, and told me I should receive a lesson from that handkerchief every day, with the addition of a fresh knot every time, unless I chose to alter my mind. I did not choose. I received the daily or rather nightly lesson, for it was then most convenient to strip me, and I came out of the ordeal in triumph. I never was fag to anybody: never made anybody's bed, or cleaned his shoes, or was

the boy to get his tea, much less expected to stand as a screen for him before the fire, which I have seen done; though, upon the whole, the boys were very mild governors.

Lamb has noticed the character of the school for good manners, which he truly describes as being equally removed from the pride of aristocratic foundations and the servility of the charity schools. I believe it retains this character still; though the changes which its system underwent not long ago, fusing all the schools into one another, and introducing a more generous diet, is thought by some not to have been followed by an advance in other respects. I have heard the school charged, more lately, with having been suffered, in the intervals between the school hours, to fall out of the liberal and gentlemanly supervision of its best teachers into the hands of an officious and ignorant sectarianism. But this may only have been a passing abuse.

I love and honour the school on private accounts; and I feel a public interest in its welfare, inasmuch as it is one of those judicious links with all classes, the importance of which, especially at a time like the present, cannot be too highly estimated; otherwise, I should have said nothing to its possible, and I hope transient disadvantage. Queen Victoria recognized its importance, by visits and other personal condescensions, long before the late changes in Europe could have diminished the grace of their bestowal; and I will venture to say that every one of those attentions will have sown for her generous nature a crop of loyalty worth having.

But for the benefit of such as are unacquainted with the city, or with a certain track of reading, I must give a more particular account of a school which in truth is a curiosity. Thousands of inhabitants of the metropolis have gone from west-end to east-end, and till the new hall was laid open to view by the alterations in Newgate Street, never suspected that in the heart of it lies an old cloistered foundation, where a boy may grow up as I did, among six hundred others, and know as little of the very neighbourhood as the world does of him.



Perhaps there is not a foundation in the country so truly English, taking that word to mean what Englishmen wish it to mean—something solid, unpretending, of good character, and free to all. More boys are to be found in it, who issue from a greater variety of ranks, than in any school in the kingdom; and as it is the most various, so it is the largest, of all the free schools. Nobility do not go there, except as boarders. Now and then a boy of a noble family may be met with, and he is reckoned an interloper, and against the charter; but the sons of poor gentry and London citizens abound; and with them an equal share is given to the sons of tradesmen of the very humblest description, not omitting servants. I would not take my oath—but I have a strong recollection that in my time there were two boys, one of whom went up into the drawing-room to his father, the master of the house; and the other, down into the kitchen, to his father, the coachman. One thing, however, I know, to be certain, and it is the noblest of all, namely, that the boys themselves (at least it was so in my time) had no sort of feeling of the difference of one another's ranks out of doors. The cleverest boy was the noblest, let his father be who he might. Christ Hospital is a nursery of tradesmen, of merchants, of naval officers, of scholars; it has produced some of the greatest ornaments of their time; and the feeling among the boys themselves is, that it is a medium between the patrician pretension of such schools as Eton and Westminster, and the plebeian submission of the charity schools. In point of university honours it claims to be equal with the best; and though other schools can show a greater abundance of eminent names, I know not where many will be found who are a greater host in themselves. One original author is worth a hundred transmitters of elegance: and such a one is to be found in Richardson, who here received what education he possessed. Here Camden also received the rudiments of his. Bishop Stillingfleet, according to the *Memoirs of Pepys*, was brought up in the school. We have had many eminent scholars, two of them Greek professors, to wit, Barnes and

Scholefield, the latter of whom attained an extraordinary succession of university honours. The rest are Markland; Middleton, late Bishop of Calcutta; and Mitchell, the translator of *Aristophanes*. Christ Hospital, I believe, towards the close of the last century and the beginning of the present, sent out more living writers, in its proportion, than any other school. There was Dr. Richards, author of the *Aboriginal Britons*; Dyer, whose life was one unbroken dream of learning and goodness, and who used to make us wonder with passing through the school-room (where no other person in "town clothes" ever appeared) to consult books in the library; Le Grice, the translator of *Longus*; Horne, author of some well-known productions in controversial divinity; Surf, the novelist (not in the Grammar School); James White, the friend of Charles Lamb, and not unworthy of him, author of *Falstaff's Letters* (this was he who used to give an anniversary dinner to the chimney-sweepers, merrier than, though not so magnificent as, Mrs. Montague's); Pitman, a celebrated preacher, editor of some school-books and religious classics (also a veritable man of wit); Mitchell, before mentioned; myself, who stood next him; Barnes, who came next, the editor of the *Times*, than whom no man (if he had cared for it) could have been more certain of attaining celebrity for wit and literature); Townsend, a prebendary of Durham, author of *Armageddon*, and several theological works (it was he who went to see the Pope, in the hope of persuading him to concede points towards the amalgamation of the Papal and Protestant Churches); Gilly, another of the Durham prebendaries, an amiable man, who wrote the *Narrative of the Waldenses*; Scargill, an Unitarian minister, author of some tracts on Peace and War, &c.; and lastly, whom I have kept by way of climax, Coleridge and Charles Lamb, two of the most original geniuses, not only of the day, but of the country.

In the time of Henry the Eighth Christ Hospital was a monastery of Franciscan friars. Being dissolved among the others, Edward the Sixth, moved by a sermon of Bishop Ridley's, assigned the revenues of it to the maintenance and

education of a certain number of poor orphan children, born of citizens of London. I believe there has been no law passed to alter the letter of this intention; which is a pity, since the alteration has taken place. An extension of it was probably very good, and even demanded by circumstances. I have reason, for one, to be grateful for it. But tampering with matters-of-fact among children is dangerous. They soon learn to distinguish between allowed poetical fiction and that which they are told, under severe penalties, never to be guilty of; and this early sample of contradiction between the thing asserted and the obvious fact, can do no good even in an establishment so plain-dealing in other respects as Christ Hospital. The place is not only designated as an Orphan-house in its Latin title, but the boys, in the prayers which they repeat every day, implore the pity of Heaven upon "us poor orphans." I remember the perplexity this caused me at a very early period. It is true, the word "orphan" may be used in a sense implying destitution of any sort; but this was not its Christ-Hospital intention; nor do the younger boys give it the benefit of that scholarly interpretation. There was another thing (now, I believe, done away) which existed in my time, and perplexed me still more. It seemed a glaring instance of the practice likely to result from the other assumption, and made me prepare for a hundred falsehoods and deceptions, which, mixed up with contradiction, as most things in society are, I sometimes did find, and oftener dreaded. I allude to a foolish custom they had in the ward which I first entered, and which was the only one that the company at the public suppers were in the habit of going into, of hanging up, by the side of each bed, a clean white napkin, which was supposed to be the one used by the occupiers. Now these napkins were only for show, the real towels being of the largest and coarsest kind. If the masters had been asked about them, they would doubtless have told the truth; perhaps the nurses would have done so. But the boys were not aware of this. There they saw these "white lies" hanging before them, a conscious imposition; and I well remember how alarmed I

used to feel, lest any of the company should direct their inquiries to me.

Christ Hospital (for this is its proper name, and not Christ's Hospital) occupies a considerable portion of ground between Newgate Street, Giltspur Street, St. Bartholomew's, and Little Britain. There is a quadrangle with cloisters; and the square inside the cloisters is called the Garden, and most likely was the monastery garden. Its only delicious crop, for many years, has been pavement. Another large area, presenting the Grammar and Navigation Schools, is also misnomered the Ditch; the town-ditch having formerly run that way. In Newgate Street is seen the hall, or eating-room, one of the noblest in England, adorned with enormously long paintings by Verrio and others, and with an organ. A portion of the old quadrangle once contained the library of the monks, and was built or repaired by the famous Whittington, whose arms were to be seen outside, but alterations of late years have done it away.

In the cloisters a number of persons lie buried, besides the officers of the house. Among them is Isabella, wife of Edward the Second—the "She-wolf of France." I was not aware of this circumstance then; but many a time, with a recollection of some lines in "Blair's Grave" upon me, have I run as hard as I could at night-time from my ward to another, in order to borrow the next volume of some ghostly romance. In one of the cloisters was an impression resembling a gigantic foot, which was attributed by some to the angry stamping of the ghost of a beadle's wife! A beadle was a higher sound to us than to most, as it involved ideas of detected apples in church-time, "skulking" (as it was called) out of bounds, and a power of reporting us to the masters. But fear does not stand upon rank and ceremony.

The wards, or sleeping-rooms, are twelve, and contained, in my time, rows of beds on each side, partitioned off, but connected with one another, and each having two boys to sleep in it. Down the middle ran the binns for holding bread and other things, and serving for a table when the meal was not

taken in the hall; and over the bins hung a great homely chandelier.

To each of these wards a nurse was assigned, who was the widow of some decent liveryman of London, and who had the charge of looking after us at night-time, seeing to our washing, &c., and carving for us at dinner; all of which gave her a good deal of power, more than her name warranted. The nurses, however, were almost invariably very deceitful people, and performed their duty; which was not always the case with the young ladies, their daughters. There were five schools; a grammar-school, a mathematical or navigation school (added by Charles the Second, through the zeal of Mr. Pepys), a writing, a drawing, and a reading school. Those who could not read when they came on the foundation went into the last. There were few in the last-but-one, and I scarcely know what they did, or for what object. The writing-school was for those who were intended for trade and commerce; the mathematical, for boys who went as midshipmen into the naval and East-India service; and the grammar-school for such as were designed for the Church, and to go to the University. The writing-school was by far the largest; and, what is very curious (it has been altered since), all the schools were kept quite distinct; so that a boy might arrive at the age of fifteen in the grammar-school, and not know his multiplication-table; which was the case with myself. Nor do I know it to this day! Shades of Horace, Walpole, and Lord Lyttelton! come to my assistance, and enable me to bear the confession: but so it is. The fault was not my fault at the time; but I ought to have repaired it when I went out in the world; and great is the mischief which it has done me.

Most of these schools had several masters; besides whom there was a steward, who took care of our subsistence, and who had a general superintendence over all hours and circumstances not connected with teaching. The masters had almost all been in the school, and might expect pensions or livings in their old age. Among those in my time, the mathematical master was Mr. Wales, a man well known for his science, who had been

round the world with Captain Cook; for which we highly venerated him. He was a good man, of plain, simple manners, with a heavy large person and a benign countenance. When he was at Otaheite, the natives played him a trick while bathing, and stole his small-clothes; which we used to think a liberty scarcely credible. The name of the steward, a thin stiff man of invincible formality of demeanour, admirably fitted to render encroachment impossible, was Hathaway. We of the grammar-school used to call him "the Yeoman," on account of Shakspeare having married the daughter of a man of that name, designated as "a substantial yeoman."

Our dress was of the coarsest and quaintest kind, but was respected out of doors, and is so. It consisted of a blue druggot gown, or body, with ample skirts to it; a yellow vest underneath in winter-time; small-clothes of Russia duck; worsted yellow stockings; a leathern girdle; and a little black worsted cap, usually carried in the hand. I believe it was the ordinary dress of children in humble life during the reign of the Tudors. We used to flatter ourselves that it was taken from the monks; and there went a monstrous tradition, that at one period it consisted of blue velvet with silver buttons. It was said, also, that during the blissful era of the blue velvet, we had roast mutton for supper; but that the small-clothes not being then in existence, and the mutton suppers too luxurious, the eatables were given up for the ineffables.

A malediction, at heart, always followed the memory of him who had taken upon himself to decide so preposterously. To say the truth, we were not too well fed at that time, either in quantity or quality; and we could not enter with our hungry imaginations into these remote philosophies. Our breakfast was bread and water, for the beer was too bad to drink. The bread consisted of the half of a three-halfpenny loaf, according to the prices then current. This was not much for growing boys, who had had nothing to eat from six or seven o'clock the preceding evening. For dinner we had the same quantity of bread, with meat only every other day, and that consisting of a small slice, such as would be given to an infant three or four

years old. Yet even that, with all our hunger, we very often left half-eaten—the meat was so tough. On the other days we had a milk-porridge, ludicrously thin; or rice-milk, which was better. There were no vegetables or puddings. Once a month we had roast beef; and twice a year (I blush to think of the eagerness with which it was looked for!) a dinner of pork. One was roast, and the other boiled; and on the latter occasion we had our only pudding, which was of peas. I blush to remember this, not on account of our poverty, but on account of the sordidness of the custom. There had much better have been none. For supper we had a like piece of bread, with butter or cheese; and then to bed, “with what appetite we might.”

Our routine of life was this. We rose to the call of a bell, at six in summer, and seven in winter; and after combing ourselves, and washing our hands and faces, went, at the call of another bell, to breakfast. All this took up about an hour. From breakfast we proceeded to school, where we remained till eleven, winter and summer, and then had an hour's play. Dinner took place at twelve. Afterwards was a little play till one, when we again went to school, and remained till five in summer and four in winter. At six was the supper. We used to play after it in summer till eight. In winter, we proceeded from supper to bed. On Sundays, the school-time of the other days was occupied in church, both morning and evening; and as the Bible was read to us every day before every meal, and on going to bed, besides prayers and graces, we rivalled the monks in the religious part of our duties.

The effect was certainly not what was intended. The Bible, perhaps, was read thus frequently, in the first instance, out of contradiction to the papal spirit that had so long kept it locked up; but, in the eighteenth century, the repetition was not so desirable among a parcel of hungry boys, anxious to get their modicum to eat. On Sunday, what with the long service in the morning, the service again after dinner, and the inaudible and indifferent tones of some of the preachers, it was unequivocally tiresome. I, for one, who had been piously brought up,

and continued to have religion inculcated on me by father and mother, began secretly to become as indifferent as I thought the preachers; and, though the morals of the school were in the main excellent and exemplary, we all felt, without knowing it, that it was the orderliness and example of the general system that kept us so, and not the religious part of it, which seldom entered our heads at all, and only tired us when it did.

I am not begging any question here, or speaking for or against. I am only stating a fact. Others may argue that, however superfluous the readings and prayers might have been, a good general spirit of religion must have been inculcated, because a great deal of virtue and religious charity is known to have issued out of that school, and no fanaticism. I shall not dispute the point. The case is true; but not the less true is what I speak of. Latterly there came, as our parish clergyman, Mr. Crowther, a nephew of our famous Richardson, and worthy of the talents and virtues of his kinsman, though inclining to a mode of faith which is supposed to produce more faith than charity. But, till then, the persons who were in the habit of getting up in our church pulpit and reading-desk might as well have hummed a tune to their diaphragms. They inspired us with nothing but mimicry. The name of the morning reader was Salt. He was a worthy man, I believe, and might, for aught we knew, have been a clever one; but he had it all to himself. He spoke in his throat, with a sound as if he were weak and corpulent; and was famous among us for saying "murracies" instead of "miracles". When we imitated him, this was the only word we drew upon: the rest was unintelligible suffocation. Our usual evening preacher was Mr. Sandiford, who had the reputation of learning and piety. It was of no use to us, except to make us associate the ideas of learning and piety in the pulpit with inaudible humdrum. Mr. Sandiford's voice was hollow and low; and he had a habit of dipping up and down over his book, like a chicken drinking. Mr. Salt was eminent for a single word. Mr. Sandiford surpassed him, for he had two audible phrases. There was, it is true, no great variety in them. One was "the dispensation of



Moses"; the other (with a due interval of hum), "the Mosaic dispensation." These he used to repeat so often, that in our caricatures of him they sufficed for an entire portrait. The reader may conceive a large church (it was Christ Church, Newgate Street), with six hundred boys, seated like charity-children up in the air, on each side of the organ, Mr. Sandiford humming in the valley, and a few maid-servants who formed his afternoon congregation. We did not dare to go to sleep. We were not allowed to read. The great boys used to get those that sat behind them to play with their hair. Some whispered to their neighbours, and the others thought of their lessons and tops. I can safely say, that many of us would have been good listeners, and most of us attentive ones, if the clergyman could have been heard. As it was, I talked as well as the rest, or thought of my exercise. Sometimes we could not help joking and laughing over our weariness; and then the fear was, lest the steward had seen us. It was part of the business of the steward to preside over the boys in church-time. He sat aloof, in a place where he could view the whole of his flock. There was a ludicrous kind of revenge we had of him, whenever a particular part of the Bible was read. This was the parable of the Unjust Steward. The boys waited anxiously till the passage commenced; and then, as if by a general conspiracy, at the words "thou unjust steward," the whole school turned their eyes upon this unfortunate officer, who sat

"Like Teneriffe or Atlas unremoved."

We persuaded ourselves, that the more unconscious he looked, the more he was acting.

By a singular chance, there were two clergymen, occasional preachers in our pulpit, who were as loud and startling as the others were somniferous. One of them, with a sort of flat, high voice, had a remarkable way of making a ladder of it, climbing higher and higher to the end of the sentence. It ought to be described by the gamut, or written up-hill. Perhaps it was an association of ideas, that has made me recollect one particular passage. It is where Ahab consults the pro-

phets, asking them whether he shall go up to Ramoth Gilead to battle. "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? and they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." He used to give this out in such a manner, that you might have fancied him climbing out of the pulpit, sword in hand. The other was a tall thin man, with a noble voice. He would commence a prayer in a most stately and imposing manner, full both of dignity and feeling; and then, as if tired of it, would hurry over all the rest. Indeed, he began every prayer in this way, and was as sure to hurry it; for which reason, the boys hailed the sight of him, as they knew they should get sooner out of church. When he commenced, in his noble style, the band seemed to tremble against his throat, as though it had been a sounding-board.

Being able to read, and knowing a little Latin, I was put at once into the Under Grammar School. How much time I wasted there in learning the accidence and syntax, I cannot say; but it seems to me a long while. My grammar seemed always to open at the same place. Things are managed differently now, I believe, in this as well as in many other respects. Great improvements have been made in the whole establishment. The boys feed better, learn better, and have longer holidays in the country. In my time, they never slept out of the school, but on one occasion, during the whole of their stay; this was for three weeks in summer-time, which they were bound to pass at a certain distance from London. They now have these holidays with a reasonable frequency; and they all go to the different schools, instead of being confined, as they were then, some to nothing but writing and ciphering, and some to the languages. It has been doubted by some of us elders, whether this system will boget such temperate, proper students, with pale faces, as the other did. I dare say, our successors are not afraid of us. I had the pleasure, some years since, of dining in company with a Deputy Grecian, who, with a stout rosy-faced person, had not failed to acquire the scholarly turn for joking which is common to a classical education; as

well as those simple, becoming manners, made up of modesty and proper confidence, which have been often remarked as distinguishing the boys on this foundation.

"But what is a Deputy Grecian?" Ah, reader! to ask that question, and at the same time to know anything at all worth knowing, would at one time, according to our notion of things, have been impossible. When I entered the school, I was shown three gigantic boys, young men, rather (for the eldest was between seventeen and eighteen), who, I was told, were going to the University. These were the Grecians. They were the three head boys of the Grammar School, and were understood to have their destiny fixed for the Church. The next class to these, like a College of Cardinals to those three Popes (for every Grecian was in our eyes infallible), were the Deputy Grecians. The former were supposed to have completed their Greek studies, and were deep in Sophocles and Euripides. The latter were thought equally competent to tell you anything respecting Homer and Demosthenes. These two classes, and the head boys of the Navigation School, held a certain rank over the whole place, both in school and out. Indeed, the whole of the Navigation School, upon the strength of cultivating their valour for the navy, and being called King's Boys, had succeeded in establishing an extraordinary pretension to respect. This, they sustained in a manner as laughable to call to mind as it was grave in its reception. It was an etiquette among them never to move out of a right line as they walked, whoever stood in their way. I believe there was a secret understanding with Grecians and Deputy Grecians, the former of whom were unquestionably lords paramount in point of fact, and stood and walked aloof when all the rest of the school were marshalled in bodies. I do not remember any clashing between these civil and naval powers, but I remember well my astonishment when I first beheld some of my little comrades overthrown by the progress of one of these very straightforward marine personages, who walked on with as tranquil and unconscious a face as if nothing had happened. It was not a fierce-looking push; there seemed to be no inten-

tion in it. The insolence lay in the boy not appearing to know that such inferior creatures existed. It was always thus, wherever he came. If away, the boys got out of his way; if not, down they went, one or more; away rolled the top or the marbles, and on walked the future captain—

“In maiden navigation, frank and free.”

These boys wore a badge on the shoulder, of which they were very proud; though in the streets it must have helped to confound them with charity boys. For charity boys, I must own, we all had a great contempt, or thought so. We did not dare to know that there might have been a little jealousy of our own position in it, placed as we were midway between the homeliness of the common charity-school and the dignity of the foundations. We called them “chizzy-wags”, and had a particular scorn and hatred of their nasal tone in singing.

The under grammar-master, in my time, was the Rev. Mr. Field. He was a good-looking man, very gentlemanly, and always dressed at the neatest. I believe he once wrote a play. He had the reputation of being admired by the ladies. A man of a more handsome incompetence for his situation perhaps did not exist. He came late of a morning; went away soon in the afternoon; and used to walk up and down, languidly bearing his cane, as if it were a lily, and hearing out eternal *Dominuses* and *As in presentis* with an air of ineffable endurance. Often he did not hear at all. It was a joke with us, when any of our friends came to the door, and we asked his permission to go to them, to address him with some preposterous question wide of the mark; to which he used to assent. We would say, for instance, “Are you not a great fool, sir?” or, “Isn’t your daughter a pretty girl?” to which he would reply, “Yes, child.” When he condescended to hit us with the cane, he made a face as if he were taking physic. Miss Field, an agreeable-looking girl, was one of the goddesses of the school; as far above us as if she had lived on Olympus. Another was Miss Patrick, daughter of the lamp-manufacturer in Newgate Street. I do not remember her face so well, not seeing it so

often; but she abounded in admirers. I write the names of these ladies at full length, because there is nothing that should hinder their being pleased at having caused us so many agreeable visions. We used to identify them with the picture of Venus in Tooke's *Pantheon*.

The other master, the upper one, Boyer—famous for the mention of him by Coleridge and Lamb—was a short, stout man, inclining to punchiness, with large face and hands, an aquiline nose, long upper lip, and a sharp mouth. His eye was close and cruel. The spectacles which he wore threw a balm over it. Being a clergyman, he dressed in black, with a powdered wig. His clothes were cut short; his hands hung out of the sleeves, with tight wristbands, as if ready for execution; and as he generally wore gray worsted stockings, very tight, with a little balustrade leg, his whole appearance presented something formidably succinct, hard, and mechanical. In fact, his weak side, and undoubtedly his natural destination, lay in carpentry; and he accordingly carried, in a side-pocket made on purpose, a carpenter's rule.

The merits of Boyer consisted in his being a good verbal scholar, and conscientiously acting up to the letter of time and attention. I have seen him nod at the close of the long summer school-hours, wearied out; and I should have pitied him if he had taught us to do anything but fear. Though a clergyman, very orthodox, and of rigid morals, he indulged himself in an oath, which was "God's-my-life!" When you were out in your lesson, he turned upon you a round staring eye like a fish; and he had a trick of pinching you under the chin, and by the lobes of the ears, till he would make the blood come. He has many times lifted a boy off the ground in this way. He was, indeed, a proper tyrant, passionate and capricious; would take violent likes and dislikes to the same boys; fondle some without any apparent reason, though he had a leaning to the servile, and, perhaps, to the sons of rich people; and he would persecute others in a manner truly frightful. I have seen him beat a sickly-looking, melancholy boy (C——n) about the head and ears, till the poor fellow, hot,

dry-eyed, and confused, seemed lost in bewilderment. C——n, not long after he took orders, died, out of his senses. I do not attribute that catastrophe to the master; and of course he could not wish to do him any lasting mischief. He had no imagination of any sort. • But there is no saying how far his treatment of the boy might have contributed to prevent a cure. Tyrannical schoolmasters nowadays are to be found, perhaps, exclusively in such inferior schools as those described with such masterly and indignant edification by my friend Charles Dickens; but they formerly seemed to have abounded in all; and masters, as well as boys, have escaped the chance of many bitter reflections, since a wiser and more generous intercourse has come up between them.

I have some stories of Boyer that will completely show his character, and at the same time relieve the reader's indignation by something ludicrous in their excess. We had a few boarders at the school: boys whose parents were too rich to let them go on the foundation. Among them, in my time, was Carlton, a son of Lord Dorchester; Macdonald, one of the Lord Chief Baron's sons; and R——, the son of a rich merchant. Carlton, who was a fine fellow, manly and full of good sense, took his new master and his caresses very coolly, and did not want them. Little Macdonald also could dispense with them, and would put on his delicate gloves after lesson, with an air as if he resumed his patrician plumage. R—— was meeker, and willing to be encouraged; and there would the master sit, with his arm round his tall waist, helping him to his Greek verbs as a nurse does bread and milk to an infant; and repeating them, when he missed, with a fond patience that astonished us criminals in drugget.

Very different was the treatment of a boy on the foundation, whose friends, by some means or other, had prevailed on the master to pay him an extra attention, and try to get him on. He had come into the school at an age later than usual, and could hardly read. There was a book used by the learners in reading, called *Dialogues between a Missionary and an Indian*. It was a poor performance, full of inconclusive arguments and

other commonplaces. The boy in question used to appear with this book in his hand in the middle of the school, the master standing behind him. The lesson was to begin. "Poor —, whose great fault lay in a deep-toned drawl of his syllables and the omission of his stops, stood half looking at the book; and half casting his eye towards the right of him, whence the blows were to proceed. The master looked over him, and his hand was ready. I am not exact in my quotation at this distance of time; but the *spirit* of one of the passages that I recollect was to the following purport; and thus did the teacher and his pupil proceed:—

*Master*—"Now, young man, have a care, or I'll set you a *swingeing* task." (A common phrase of his.)

*Pupil*—(Making a sort of heavy bolt at his calamity, and never remembering his stop at the word *Missionary*.) "*Missionary* 'Can you see the wind?'"

(Master gives him a slap on the cheek.)

*Pupil*—(Raising his voice to a cry, and still forgetting his stop.) "*Indian* 'No!'"

*Master*—"God's-my-life, young man! have a care how you provoke me!"

*Pupil*—(Always forgetting the stop.) "*Missionary* 'How then do you know that there is such a thing?'"

(Here a terrible thump.)

*Pupil*—(With a shout of agony.) "*Indian* 'Because I feel it.'"

One anecdote of his injustice will suffice for all. It is of ludicrous enormity; nor do I believe anything more flagrantly wilful was ever done by himself. I heard Mr. C—, the sufferer, now a most respectable person in a Government office, relate it with a due relish, long after quitting the school. The master was in the habit of "spiting" C—; that is to say, of taking every opportunity to be severe with him; nobody knew why. One day he comes into the school, and finds him placed in the middle of it with three other boys. He was not in one of his worst humours, and did not seem inclined to punish them, till he saw his antagonist. "Oh, oh!

sir," said he; what! you are among them, are you?" and gave him an exclusive thump on the face. He then turned to one of the Grecians, and said, "I have not time to flog all these boys; make them draw lots, and I'll punish one." The lots were drawn, and C——'s was favourable. "Oh, oh!" returned the master when he saw them, "you have escaped, have you, sir?" and pulling out his watch, and turning again to the Grecian, observed that he found he *had* time to punish the whole three; "and, sir," added he to C——, with another slap, "I'll begin with *you*. He then took the boy into the library and flogged him; and on issuing forth again had the face to say, with an air of indifference, "I have not time after all to punish these two other boys; let them take care how they provoke me another time."

Often did I wish that I were a fairy, in order to play him tricks like a Caliban. We used to sit and fancy what we should do with his wig; how we would hamper and vex him; "put knives in his pillow, and halters in his pew." To venture on a joke in our own mortal persons was like playing with Polyphemus. One afternoon, when he was nodding with sleep over a lesson, a boy of the name of Meader, who stood behind him, ventured to take a pin and begin advancing with it up his wig. The hollow exhibited between the wig and the nape of the neck invited him. The boys encouraged this daring act of gallantry. Nods and becks, and then whispers of "Go it, M.!" gave more and more valour to his hand. On a sudden the master's head falls back; he starts with eyes like a shark, and seizing the unfortunate culprit, who stood helpless in the act of holding the pin, caught hold of him, fiery with passion. A "swingeing task" ensued, which kept him at home all the holidays. One of these tasks would consist of an impossible quantity of Virgil which the learner, unable to retain it at once, wasted his heart and soul out "to get up," till it was too late.

Sometimes, however, our despot got into a dilemma, and then he did not know how to get out of it. A boy, now and then, would be roused into open and fierce remonstrance. I



recollect S., afterwards one of the mildest of preachers, starting up in his place, and pouring forth on his astonished hearer a torrent of invectives and threats, which the other could only answer by looking pale and uttering a few threats in return. Nothing came of it. He did not like such matters to go before the governors. Another time, Favell, a Grecian, a youth of high spirit, whom he had struck, went to the school-door, opened it, and, turning round with the handle in his grasp, told him he would never set foot again in the place unless he promised to treat him with more delicacy. "Come back, child; come back!" said the other, pale, and in a faint voice. There was a dead silence. Favell came back, and nothing more was done.

A sentiment, unaccompanied with something practical, would have been lost upon him. D——, who went afterwards to the Military College at Woolwich, played him a trick, apparently between jest and earnest, which amused us exceedingly. He was to be flogged; and the dreadful door of the library was approached. (They did not invest the books with flowers, as Montaigne recommends.) Down falls the criminal, and twisting himself about the master's legs, which he does the more when the other attempts to move, repeats without ceasing, "Oh, good God! consider my father, sir, my father, sir; you know my father!" The point was felt to be getting ludicrous, and was given up. P——, now a popular preacher, was in the habit of entertaining the boys that way. He was a regular wag; and would snatch his jokes out of the very flame and fury of the master, like snapdragon. Whenever the other struck him, P. would get up; and half to avoid the blows, and half render them ridiculous, begin moving about the school-room, making all sorts of antics. When he was struck in the face, he would clap his hand with affected vehemence to the place, and cry as rapidly, "Oh, Lord!" If the blow came on the arm, he would grasp his arm, with a similar exclamation. The master would then go, driving and kicking him; while the patient accompanied every blow with the same comments and illustrations, making faces to us by way of index.

What a bit of a golden age was it, when the Rev. Mr. Steevens, one of the under grammar-masters, took his place, on some occasion, for a short time! Steevens was short and fat, with a handsome, cordial face. You loved him as you looked at him; and seemed as if you should love him the more the fatter he became. I stammered when I was at that time of life, which was an infirmity that used to get me into terrible trouble with the master. Steevens used to say, on the other hand, "Here comes our little black-haired friend, who stammers so. Now, let us see what we can do for him." The consequence was, I did not hesitate half so much as with the other. When I did, it was out of impatience to please him.

Such of us were not liked the better by the master as were in favour with his wife. She was a sprightly, good-looking woman, with black eyes; and was beheld with transport by the boys whenever she appeared at the school door. Her husband's name entered in a mingled tone of good-nature and imperative-ness, brought him down from his seat with smiling haste. Sometimes he did not return. On entering the school one day he found a boy eating cherries. "Where did you get those cherries?" exclaimed he, thinking the boy had nothing to say for himself. "Mrs. Boyer gave them me, sir." He turned away, scowling with disappointment.

Speaking of fruit reminds me of a pleasant trait on the part of a Grecian of the name of Le Grice. He was the maddest of all the great boys in my time; clever, full of address, and not hampered with modesty. Remote humours, not lightly to be heard, fell on our ears, respecting pranks of his amongst the nurses' daughters. He had a fair handsome face, with delicate aquiline nose and twinkling eyes. I remember his astonishing me when I was "a new boy" with sending me for a bottle of water, which he proceeded to pour down the back of G., a grave Deputy Grecian. On the master asking him one day why he, of all the boys, had given up no exercise (it was a particular exercise that they were bound to do in the course of a long set of holidays), he said he had had "a lethargy". The extreme impudence of this puzzled the master; and I believe

nothing came of it. But what I alluded to about the fruit was this. Le Grice was in the habit of eating apples in school-time, for which he had been often rebuked. One day, having particularly pleased the master, the latter, who was eating apples himself, and who would now and then with great ostentation present a boy with some halfpenny token of his mansuetude, called out to his favourite of the moment, "Le Grice, here is an apple for you." Le Grice, who felt his dignity hurt as a Grecian, but was more pleased at having this opportunity of mortifying his reprover, replied, with an exquisite tranquillity of assurance, "Sir, I never eat apples." For this, among other things, the boys adored him. Poor fellow! He and Favell (who, though very generous, was said to be a little too sensible of an humble origin) wrote to the Duke of York when they were at College for commissions in the army. The Duke good-naturedly sent them. Le Grice died in the West Indies. Favell was killed in one of the battles in Spain, but not before he had distinguished himself as an officer and a gentleman.

The Upper Grammar School was divided into four classes or forms. The two under ones were called Little and Great Erasmus; the two upper were occupied by the Grecians and Deputy Grecians. We used to think the title of Erasmus taken from the great scholar of that name; but the sudden appearance of a portrait among us, bearing to be the likeness of a certain Erasmus Smith, Esq., shook us terribly in this opinion, and was a hard trial of our gratitude. We scarcely relished this perpetual company of our benefactor, watching us, as he seemed to do, with his omnipresent eyes. I believe he was a rich merchant, and that the forms of Little and Great Erasmus were really named after him. It was but a poor consolation to think that he himself, or his great-uncle, might have been named after Erasmus. Little Erasmus learned Ovid; Great Erasmus, Virgil, Terence, and the Greek Testament. The Deputy Grecians were in Homer, Cicero, and Demosthenes; the Grecians, in the Greek plays and the mathematics.

When a boy entered the Upper School he was understood to be in the road to the University, provided he had inclination and talents for it; but, as only one Grecian a year went to College, the drafts out of Great and Little Erasmus into the writing-school were numerous. A few also became Deputy Grecians without going farther, and entered the world from that form. Those who became Grecians always went to the University, though not always into the Church; which was reckoned a departure from the contract. When I first came to school, at seven years old, the names of the Grecians were Tuten, Favell, Thomson, and Le Grice, brother of the Le Grice above mentioned, and now a clergyman in Cornwall. Charles Lamb had lately been Deputy Grecian; and Coleridge had left for the University.

The master, inspired by his subject with an eloquence beyond himself, once called him, "that sensible fool, Coleridge," pronouncing the word like a dactyl. Coleridge must have alternately delighted and bewildered him. The compliment as to the bewildering was returned, if not the delight. The pupil, I am told, said he dreamt of the master all his life, and that his dreams were horrible. A *bon-mot* of his is recorded, very characteristic both of pupil and master. Coleridge, when he heard of his death, said, "It was lucky that the cherubim who took him to heaven were nothing but faces and wings, or he would infallibly have flogged them by the way." This was his esoterical opinion of him. His outward and subtler opinion, or opinion exoterical, he favoured the public with in his *Literary Life*. He praised him, among other things, for his good taste in poetry, and his not suffering the boys to get into the commonplaces of Castalian Streams, Invocations to the Muses, &c. Certainly, there were no such things in our days—at least, to the best of my remembrance. But I do not think the master saw through them, out of a perception of anything further. His objection to a commonplace must have been itself commonplace.

I do not remember seeing Coleridge when I was a child. Lamb's visits to the school, after he left it, I remember well,

with his fine intelligent face. Little did I think I should have the pleasure of sitting with it in after times as an old friend, and seeing it careworn and still finer. Allen, the Grecian, was so handsome, though in another and more obvious way, that running one day against a barrow-woman in the street, and turning round to appease her in the midst of her abuse, she said, "Where are you driving to, you great hulking, good-for-nothing—beautiful fellow, God bless you!" Le Grice, the elder, was a wag, like his brother, but more staid. He went into the Church, as he ought to do, and married a rich widow. He published a translation, abridged, of the celebrated pastoral of Longus; and report at school made him the author of a little anonymous tract on the *Art of Poking the Fire*.

Few of us cared for any of the books that were taught; and no pains were taken to make us do so. The boys had no helps to information, bad or good, except what the master afforded them respecting manufactures—a branch of knowledge to which, as I before observed, he had a great tendency, and which was the only point on which he was enthusiastic and gratuitous. I do not blame him for what he taught us of this kind; there was a use in it, beyond what he was aware of; but it was the only one on which he volunteered any assistance. In this he took evident delight. I remember, in explaining pigs of iron or lead to us, he made a point of crossing one of his legs with the other, and, cherishing it up and down with great satisfaction, saying, "A pig, children, is about the thickness of my leg." Upon which, with a slavish pretence of novelty, we all looked at it, as if he had not told us so a hundred times. In everything else we had to hunt out our own knowledge. He would not help us with a word till he had ascertained that we had done all we could to learn the meaning of it ourselves. This discipline was useful, and in this and every other respect we had all the advantages which a mechanical sense of right, and a rigid exaction of duty, could afford us, but no further. The only superfluous grace that he was guilty of was the keeping a manuscript book, in which, by a rare luck, the best exercise in English verse was occasionally copied out for

immortality! To have verses in "the Book" was the rarest and highest honour conceivable to our imaginations. I never, alas! attained it.

How little did I care for any verses at that time, except English ones; I had no regard even for Ovid. I read and knew nothing of Horace, though I had got somehow a liking for his character. Cicero I disliked, as I cannot help doing well. Demosthenes I was inclined to admire, but did not know why, and would very willingly have given up him and his difficulties together. Homer I regarded with horror, as a series of lessons which I had to learn by heart before I understood him. When I had to conquer, in this way, lines which I had not construed, I had recourse to a sort of artificial memory, by which I associated the Greek words with sounds that had a meaning in English. Thus, a passage about Thetis I made to bear on some circumstance that had taken place in the school. An account of a battle was converted into a series of jokes; and the master, while I was saying my lesson to him in trepidation, little suspected what a figure he was often cutting in the text. The only classic I remember having any love for was Virgil; and that was for the episode of Nisus and Euryalus.

But there were three books which I read in whenever I could, and which often got me into trouble. These were Tooke's *Pantheon*, Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*, and Spence's *Polymetis*, the great folio edition with plates. Tooke was a prodigious favourite with us. I see before me, as vividly now as ever, his Mars and Apollo, his Venus and Aurora, which I was continually trying to copy; the Mars, coming on furiously in his car; Apollo, with his radiant head, in the midst of shades and fountains; Aurora with hers, a golden dawn; and Venus, very handsome, we thought, and not looking too modest in "a slight cymar." It is curious how completely the graces of the Pagan theology overcame with us the wise cautions and reproofs that were set against it in the pages of Mr. Tooke. Some years after my departure from school, happening to look at the work in question, I was surprised to find so much of that matter in him. When I came to reflect, I had a sort

of recollection that we used occasionally to notice it, as something inconsistent with the rest of the text—strange, and odd, and like the interference of some pedantic old gentleman. This, indeed, is pretty nearly the case. The author has also made a strange mistake about Bacchus, whom he represents, both in his text and his print, as a mere belly-god; a corpulent child, like the Bacchus bestriding a tun. This is anything but classical. The truth is, it was a sort of pious fraud, like many other things palmed upon antiquity. Tooke's *Pantheon* was written originally in Latin by the Jesuits.

Our Lempriere was a fund of entertainment. Spence's *Poly-metis* was not so easily got at. There was also something in the text that did not invite us; but we admired the fine large prints. However, Tooke was the favourite. I cannot divest myself of a notion, to this day, that there is something really clever in the picture of Apollo. The Minerva we "could not abide;" Juno was no favourite, for all her throne and her peacock; and we thought Diana too pretty. The instinct against these three goddesses begins early. I used to wonder how Juno and Minerva could have the insolence to dispute the apple with Venus.

In those times, Cooke's edition of the British poets came up. I had got an old volume of Spenser; and I fell passionately in love with Collins and Gray. How I loved those little sixpenny numbers containing whole poets! I doted on their size, I doted on their type, on their ornaments, on their wrappers containing lists of other poets, and on the engravings from Kirk. I bought them over and over again, and used to get up select sets, which disappeared like buttered crumpets; for I could resist neither giving them away, nor possessing them. When the master tormented me—when I used to hate and loathe the sight of Homer, and Demosthenes, and Cicero—I would comfort myself with thinking of the sixpence in my pocket, with which I should go out to Paternoster Row, when school was over, and buy another number of an English poet.

I was already fond of writing verses. The first I remember were in honour of the Duke of York's "Victory at Dunkirk;"

which victory, to my great mortification, turned out to be a defeat. I compared him with Achilles and Alexander; or should rather say, trampled upon those heroes in the comparison. I fancied him riding through the field, and shooting right and left of him! Afterwards, when in Great Erasmus, I wrote a poem called *Winter*, in consequence of reading Thomson; and when Deputy Grecian, I completed some hundred stanzas of another called the *Fairy King*, which was to be in emulation of Spenser! I also wrote a long poem in irregular Latin verses (such as they were) entitled *Thor*; the consequence of reading Gray's Odes and Mallett's *Northern Antiquities*. English verses were the only exercise I performed with satisfaction. Themes, or prose essays, I wrote so badly, that the master was in the habit of contemptuously crumpling them up in his hand, and calling out, "Here, children, there is something to amuse you!" Upon which the servile part of the boys would jump up, seize the paper, and be amused accordingly.

The essays must have been very absurd, no doubt; but those who would have tasted the ridicule best were the last to move. There was an absurdity in giving us such essays to write. They were upon a given subject, generally a moral one, such as Ambition or the Love of Money: and the regular process in the manufacture was this:—You wrote out the subject very fairly at top, *Quid non mortalia*, &c., or, *Crescit amor nummi*. Then the ingenious thing was to repeat this apophthegm in as many words and roundabout phrases as possible, which took up a good bit of the paper. Then you attempted to give a reason or two, why *amor nummi* was bad; or on what accounts heroes ought to eschew ambition; after which naturally came a few examples, got out of Plutarch or the *Selectæ e Profanis*; and the happy moralist concluded with signing his name. Somebody speaks of schoolboys going about to one another on these occasions, and asking for "a little sense." That was not the phrase with us; it was "a thought." "P——, can you give me a thought?" "C——, for God's sake, help me to a thought, for it only wants ten



minutes to eleven," It was a joke with P——, who knew my hatred of themes, and how I used to hurry over them, to come to me at a quarter to eleven, and say, "Hunt, have you *begun* your theme?"—"Yes, P——." He then, when the quarter of an hour had expired, and the bell tolled, came again, and, with a sort of rhyming formula to the other question, said, "Hunt, have you *done* your theme?"—"Yes, P——."

How I dared to trespass in this way upon the patience of the master, I cannot conceive. I suspect that the themes appeared to him more absurd than careless. Perhaps another thing perplexed him. The master was rigidly orthodox; the school establishment also was orthodox and high Tory; and there was just then a little perplexity, arising from the free doctrines inculcated by the books we learned, and the new and alarming echo of them struck on the ears of power by the French Revolution. My father was in the habit of expressing his opinions. He did not conceal the new tendency which he felt to modify those which he entertained respecting both Church and State. His unconscious son at school, nothing doubting or suspecting, repeated his eulogies of Timoleon and the Gracchi, with all a schoolboy's enthusiasm; and the master's mind was not of a pitch to be superior to this unwitting annoyance. It was on these occasions, I suspect, that he crumpled up my themes with a double contempt, and with an equal degree of perplexity.

There was a better school exercise, consisting of an abridgement of some paper in the *Spectator*. We made, however, little of it, and thought it very difficult and perplexing. In fact, it was a hard task for boys, utterly unacquainted with the world, to seize the best points out of the writings of masters in experience. It only gave the *Spectator* an unnatural gravity in our eyes. A common paper for selection, because reckoned one of the easiest, was the one beginning, "I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth." I had heard this paper so often, and was so tired with it, that it gave me a great inclination to prefer mirth to cheerfulness.

My books were a never-ceasing consolation to me, and such they have ever continued. My favourites, out of school hours, were Spenser, Collins, Gray, and the *Arabian Nights*. Pope I admired more than loved; Milton was above me; and the only play of Shakespeare's with which I was conversant was *Hamlet*, of which I had a delighted awe. Neither then, however, nor at any time, have I been as fond of dramatic reading as of any other, though I have written many dramas myself, and have even a special propensity for so doing; a contradiction for which I have never been able to account. Chaucer, who has since been one of my best friends, I was not acquainted with at school, nor till long afterwards. *Hudibras* I remember reading through at one desperate plunge, while I lay incapable of moving, with two scalded legs. I did it as a sort of achievement, driving on through the verses without understanding a twentieth part of them, but now and then laughing immoderately at the rhymes and similes, and catching a bit of knowledge unawares. I had a schoolfellow of the name of Brooke, afterwards an officer in the East Indian Service—a grave, quiet boy, with a fund of manliness and good-humour. He would pick out the ludicrous couplets, like plums; such as those on the astrologer,—

“Who deals in destiny's dark counsels,  
And sage opinions of the moon sells;”

And on the apothecary's shop—

“With stores of deleterious medicines,  
Which whosoever took is dead since.”

He had the little thick duodecimo edition, with Hogarth's plates—dirty, and well read, looking like *Hudibras* himself.

I read through, at the same time, and with little less sense of it as a task, Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The divinity of it was so much “Heathen Greek” to us. Unluckily, I could not taste the beautiful “Heathen Greek” of the style. Milton's heaven made no impression; nor could I enter even into the earthly catastrophe of his man and woman. The only two things I thought of were their happiness in Paradise, where (to me) they eternally remained; and the strange malignity of

the devil, who, instead of getting them out of it, as the poet represents, only served to bind them closer. He seemed an odd shade to the picture. The figure he cut in the engravings was more in my thoughts than anything said of him in the poem. He was a sort of human wild beast, lurking about the garden in which they lived; though, in consequence of the dress given him in some of the plates, this man with a tail occasionally confused himself in my imagination with a Roman general. I could make little of it. I believe, the plates impressed me altogether much more than the poem. Perhaps they were the reason why I thought of Adam and Eve as I did; the pictures of them in their paradisaical state being more numerous than those in which they appear exiled. Besides, in their exile they were together; and this constituting the best thing in their paradise, I suppose I could not so easily get miserable with them when out of it. I had the same impression from Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas*. I never thought of anything in it but the Happy Valley. I might have called to mind, with an effort, a shadowy something about disappointment, and a long remainder of talk which I would not read again, perhaps never thoroughly did read. The Happy Valley was new to me, and delightful, and everlasting; and there the princely inmates were everlastingly to be found.

The scald that I speak of as confining me to bed was a bad one. I will give an account of it, because it furthers the elucidation of our school manners. I had then become a monitor, or one of the chiefs of a ward; and I was sitting before the fire one evening, after the boys had gone to bed, wrapped up in the perusal of the *Wonderful Magazine*, and having in my ear at the same time the bubbling of a great pot, or rather cauldron of water, containing what was by courtesy called a bread-pudding; being neither more nor less than a loaf or two of our bread, which, with a little sugar mashed up with it, was to serve for my supper. And there were eyes, not yet asleep, which would look at it out of their beds, and regard it as a lordly dish. From this dream of bliss I was roused up on the sudden by a great cry, and a horrible agony in my legs. A "boy," as a fag was called, wishing to get something from the other side of the fireplace, and not choosing

either to go round behind the table, or to disturb the illustrious legs of the monitor, had endeavoured to get under them or between them, and so pulled the great handle of the pot after him. It was a frightful sensation. The whole of my being seemed collected in one fiery torment into my legs. Wood, the Grecian (afterwards Fellow of Pembroke, at Cambridge), who was in our ward, and who was always very kind to me. I believe, by my inclination for verses, in which he had a great name), came out of his study, and after helping me off with my stockings, which was a horrid operation, the stockings being very coarse, took me in his arms to the sick ward. I shall never forget the enchanting relief occasioned by the cold air, as it blew across the square of the sick ward. I lay there for several weeks, not allowed to move for some time; and calisthenics became necessary before I got well. The getting well was delicious. I had no tasks—no master; plenty of books to read; and the nurse's daughter (*absit calumnia*) brought me tea and buttered toast, and encouraged me to play the flute. My playing consisted of a few tunes by rote; my fellow-invalids (none of them in very desperate case) would have it rather than no playing at all; so we used to play and tell stories, and go to sleep, thinking of the blessed sick holiday we should have to-morrow, and of the bowl of milk and bread for breakfast, which was alone worth being sick for. The sight of Mr. Long's probe was not so pleasant. We preferred seeing it in the hands of Mr. Vincent, whose manners, quiet and mild, had double effect on a set of boys more or less jealous of the mixed humbleness and importance of their school. This was most likely the same gentleman of the name of Vincent, who afterwards became distinguished in his profession. He was dark, like a West Indian, and I used to think him handsome. Perhaps the nurse's daughter taught me to think so, for she was a considerable observer.

I am grateful to Christ Hospital for having bred me up in old cloisters, for its making me acquainted with the languages of Homer and Ovid, and for its having secured to me, on the whole, a well-trained and cheerful boyhood. It pressed no superstition upon me. It did not hinder my growing mind

from making what excursions it pleased into the wide and healthy regions of general literature. I might buy as much Collins and Gray as I pleased, and get novels to my heart's content from the circulating libraries. There was nothing prohibited but what would have been prohibited by all good fathers; and everything was encouraged which would have been encouraged by the Steeles, and Addisons, and Popes; by the Warburtons, and Atterburys, and Hoadleys. Boyer was a severe, nay, a cruel master; but age and reflection have made me sensible that I ought always to add my testimony to his being a laborious and a conscientious one. When his severity went beyond the mark, I believe he was always sorry for it; sometimes I am sure he was. He once (though the anecdote at first sight may look like a burlesque on the remark) knocked out one of my teeth with the back of a Homer, in a fit of impatience at my stammering. The tooth was a loose one, and I told him as much; but the blood rushed out as I spoke: he turned pale, and, on my proposing to go out and wash the mouth, he said, "Go, child," in a tone of voice amounting to the paternal. Now "Go, child," from Boyer, was worth a dozen tender speeches from anyone else; and it was felt that I had got an advantage over him, acknowledged by himself.

If I had reaped no other benefit from Christ Hospital, the school would be ever dear to me from the recollection of the friendships I formed in it, and of the first heavenly taste it gave me of that most spiritual of the affections. I use the word "heavenly" advisedly; and I call friendship the most spiritual of the affections, because even one's kindred, in partaking of our flesh and blood, become, in a manner, mixed up with our entire being. Not that I would disparage any other form of affection, worshipping, as I do, all forms of it, love in particular, which, in its highest state, is friendship and something more. But if ever I tasted a disembodied transport on earth, it was in those friendships which I entertained at school, before I dreamt of any maturer feeling. I shall never forget the impression it first made on me. I loved my friend for his gentleness, his candour, his truth, his good repute, his freedom even from my own livelier manner, his calm and reasonable kindness. It was not any particular talent that

attracted me to him, on anything striking whatsoever. I should say, in one word, it was his goodness. I doubt whether he ever had a conception of a title of the regard and respect I entertained for him; and I smile to think of the perplexity (though he never showed it) which he probably felt sometimes at my enthusiastic expressions; for I thought him a kind of angel. It is no exaggeration to say, that, take away the unspiritual part of it—the genius and the knowledge—and there is no height of conceit indulged in by the most romantic character in Shakspeare, which surpassed what I felt towards the merits I ascribed to him, and the delight which I took in his society. With the other boys I played antics, and rioted in fantastic jests; but in his society, or whenever I thought of him, I fell into a kind of Sabbath state of bliss; and I am sure I could have died for him.

I experienced this delightful affection towards three successive schoolfellows, till two of them had for some time gone out into the world and forgotten me; but it grew less with each, and in more than one instance became rivalled by a new set of emotions, especially in regard to the last, for I fell in love with his sister—at least, I thought so. But on the occurrence of her death, not long after, I was startled at finding myself assume an air of greater sorrow than I felt, and at being willing to be relieved by the sight of the first pretty face that turned towards me. . . .

As it was, my first flame, or my first notion of a flame, which is the same thing in those days, was for my giddy cousin Fanny Dayrell, a charming West Indian. Her mother had just come from Barbadoes with her two daughters and a sister. She was a woman of a princely spirit; and having a good property, and every wish to make her relations more comfortable, she did so. It became holiday with us all. My mother raised her head; my father grew young again; my cousin Kate (Christina, rather, for her name was not Catherine; Christina Arabella was her name) conceived a regard for one of my brothers, and married him; and, for my part, besides my pictures and Italian garden at Mr. West's, and my beloved old English house in Austin Friars, I had now another paradise in Great Ormond Street.

My aunt had something of the West Indian bride, but all in a good spirit, and was a mighty cultivator of the gentilities, inward as well as outward. I did not dare to appear before her with dirty hands, she would have rebuked me so handsomely. For some reason or other, the marriage of my brother and his cousin was kept secret a little while. I became acquainted with it by chance, coming in upon a holiday, the day the ceremony took place. Instead of keeping me out of the secret by a trick, they very wisely resolved upon trusting me with it, and relying upon my honour. My honour happened to be put to the test, and I came off with flying colours. It is to this circumstance I trace the religious idea I have ever since entertained of keeping a secret. I went with the bride and bridegroom to church, and remember kneeling apart and weeping bitterly. My tears were unaccountable to me then. Doubtless they were owing to an instinctive sense of the great change that was taking place in the lives of two human beings, and of the unalterableness of the engagement. Death and Life seem to come together on these occasions, like awful guests at a feast, and look one another in the face.

It was not with such good effect that my aunt raised my notions of a schoolboy's pocket money to half-crowns, and crowns, and half-guineas. My father and mother were both as generous as daylight; but they could not give what they had not. I had been unused to spending, and accordingly I spent with a vengeance. I remember a ludicrous instance. The first half-guinea that I received brought about me a consultation of companions to know how to get rid of it. One shilling was devoted to pears, another to apples, another to cakes, and so on, all to be bought immediately, as they were; till coming to the sixpence, and being struck with a recollection that I ought to do something useful with that, I bought sixpenn'orth of shoe-strings; these, no doubt, vanished like the rest. The next half-guinea came to the knowledge of the master: he interfered, which was one of his proper actions; and my aunt practised more self-denial in future.

Our new family from abroad were true West Indians, or, as they would have phrased it, "true Barbadians born." They were generous, warm-tempered, had great good-nature;

were proud, but not unpleasantly so; lively, yet indolent; temperately epicurean in their diet; fond of company, and dancing, and music; and lovers of show, but far from withholding the substance. I speak chiefly of the mother and daughters. My other aunt, an elderly maiden, who piqued herself on the delicacy of her hands and ankles, and made you understand how many suitors she had refused, for which she expressed anything but repentance, being extremely vexed), was not deficient in complexional good-nature; but she was narrow-minded, and seemed to care for nothing in the world but two things: first, for her elder niece Kate, whom she had helped to nurse; and second, for a becoming set-out of coffee and buttered toast, particularly of a morning, when it was taken up to her in bed, with a suitable equipage of silver and other necessities of life. Yes; there was one more indispensable thing—slavery. It was frightful to hear her small, smooth and little mincing tones assert the necessity not only of sin, but of robust corporal punishment to keep them to their duty. But she did this, because her want of ideas could do no otherwise. Having had slaves, she wondered how anybody could object to so natural and ladylike an establishment. Late in life, she took to fancying that every polite old gentleman was in love with her; and thus she lived on, till her dying moment, in a flutter of expectation.

The black servant must have puzzled this aunt of mine sometimes. All the wonder of which she was capable, he certainly must have roused, not without a “quaver of consternation.” This man had come over with them from the West Indies. He was a slave on my aunt’s estate, and as such he demeaned himself, till he learned that there was no such thing as a slave in England; that the moment a man set his foot on English ground he was free. I cannot help smiling to think of the bewildered astonishment into which his first overt act, in consequence of this knowledge, must have put my poor aunt Courthope (for that was her Christian name). Most likely it broke out in the shape of some remonstrance about his fellow-servants. He partook of the pride common to all the Barbadians, black as well as white; and



the maid-servants tormented him. I remember his coming up in the parlour one day, and making a ludicrous representation of the affronts put upon his office and person, interspersing his chattering and gesticulations with explanatory dumb-show. One of the maids was a pretty girl, who had manœuvred till she got him stuck in a corner; and he insisted upon telling us all that she said and did. His respect for himself had naturally increased since he became free; but he did not know what to do with it. Poor Samuel was not ungenerous, after his fashion. He also wished, with his freedom, to acquire a freeman's knowledge, but stuck fast at pothooks and hangers. To frame a written B he pronounced a thing impossible. Of his powers on the violin he made us more sensible, not without frequent remonstrances, which it must have taken all my aunt's good-nature to make her repeat. He had left two wives in Barbadoes, one of whom was brought to bed of a son a little after he came away. For this son he wanted a name, that was new, sounding, and long. They referred him to the reader of Homer and Virgil. With classical names he was well acquainted, Mars and Venus being among his most intimate friends, besides Jupiters and Adonises, and Dianas with large families. At length we succeeded with Neoptolemus. He said he had never heard it before; and he made me write it for him in a great text-hand, that there might be no mistake.

My aunt took a country-house at Merton, in Surrey, where I passed three of the happiest weeks of my life. It was the custom at our school, in those days, to allow us only one set of unbroken holidays during the whole time we were there—I mean, holidays in which we remained away from school by night as well as by day. The period was always in August. Imagine a schoolboy passionately fond of the green fields, who had never slept out of the heart of the city for years. It was a compensation even for the pang of leaving my friend; and then what letters I would write to him! And what letters I did write! What full measure of affection pressed down, and running over! I read, walked, had a garden and orchard to run in; and fields that I could have rolled in, to have my fill of them.

My father accompanied me to Wimbledon to see Horne Tooke, who patted me on the head. I felt very differently under his hand, and under that of the Bishop of London, when he confirmed a crowd of us in St. Paul's. Not that I thought of politics, though I had a sense of his being a patriot; but patriotism, as well as everything else, was connected in my mind with something classical, and Horne Tooke held his political reputation with me by the same tenure that he held his fame for learning and grammatical knowledge. "The learned Horne Tooke" was the designation by which I styled him in some verses I wrote; in which verses, by the way, with a poetical license which would have been thought more classical by Queen Elizabeth than my master, I called my aunt a "nymph." In the ceremony of confirmation by the bishop, there was something too official and like a despatch of business, to excite my veneration. My head only anticipated the coming of his hand with a thrill in the scalp; and when it came, it tickled me.

My cousins had the celebrated Dr. Callcott for a music-master. The doctor, who was a scholar and a great reader, was so pleased with me one day for being able to translate the beginning of Xenophon's *Anabasis* (one of our school-books), that he took me out with him to Nunn's the bookseller's in Great Queen Street, and made me a present of Schrevelius's *Lexicon*. When he came down to Merton, he let me ride his horse. What days were those! Instead of being roused against my will by a bell, I jumped up with the lark, and strolled "out of bounds." Instead of bread and water for breakfast, I had coffee, and tea, and buttered toast: for dinner, not a hunk of bread and a modicum of hard meat, or a bowl of pretended broth; but fish, and fowl, and noble hot joints, and puddings, and sweets, and Guava jellies, and other West Indian mysteries of peppers and preserves, and wine; and then I had tea; and I sat up to supper like a man, and lived so well, that I might have been very ill, had I not run about all the rest of the day.

My strolls about the fields with a book were full of happiness: only my dress used to get me stared at by the villagers. Walking one day by the little river Wandle, I came upon one

of the loveliest girls I ever beheld, standing in the water with bare legs, washing some linen. She turned as she was stooping, and showed a blooming oval face with blue eyes, on either side of which flowed a profusion of flaxen locks. With the exception of the colour of the hair, it was like Raphael's own head turned into a peasant girl's. The eyes were full of gentle astonishment at the sight of me; and mine must have wondered no less. However, I was prepared for such wonders. It was only one of my poetical visions realized, and I expected to find the world full of them. What she thought of my blue skirts and yellow stockings is not so clear. She did not, however, taunt me with my "petticoats", as the girls in the streets of London would do, making me blush, as I thought they ought to have done instead. My beauty in the brook was too gentle and diffident; at least I thought so, and my own heart did not contradict me. I then took every beauty for an Arcadian, and every brook for a fairy stream; and the reader would be surprised if he knew to what an extent I have a similar tendency still. I find the same possibilities by another path.

I do not remember whether an Abbé Paris, who taught my cousins French, used to see them in the country; but I never shall forget him in Ormond Street. He was an emigrant, very gentlemanly, with a face of remarkable benignity, and a voice that became it. He spoke English in a slow manner, that was very graceful. I shall never forget his saying one day, in answer to somebody who pressed him on the subject, and in the mildest of tones, that without doubt it was impossible to be saved out of the pale of the Catholic Church.

One contrast of this sort reminds me of another. My Aunt Courthope had something growing out on one of her knuckles, which she was afraid to let a surgeon look at. There was a Dr. Chapman, a West Indian physician, who came to see us, a person of great suavity of manners, with all that air of languor and want of energy which the West Indians often exhibit. He was in the habit of inquiring, with the softest voice in the world, how my aunt's hand was; and coming one day upon us, in the midst of dinner, and sighing forth his usual question, she gave it him over her shoulder to look at. In a moment

she shrieked; and the swelling was gone. The meekest of doctors had done it away with his lancet.

I had no drawback on my felicity at Merton, with the exception of an occasional pang at my friend's absence, and a new vexation that surprised and mortified me. I had been accustomed at school to sleep with sixty boys in the room, and some old night-fears, that used to haunt me were forgotten. No Manticoras there!—no old men crawling on the floor! What was my chagrin, when on sleeping alone, after so long a period, I found my terrors come back again!—not, indeed, in all the same shapes. Beasts could frighten me no longer; but I was at the mercy of any other ghastly fiction that presented itself to my mind, crawling or ramping. I struggled hard to say nothing about it; but my days began to be discoloured with fears of my nights; and with unutterable humiliation I begged that the footman might be allowed to sleep in the same room. Luckily, my request was attended to in the kindest and most reconciling manner. I was pitied for my fears, but praised for my candour—a balance of qualities which, I have reason to believe, did me a service far beyond that of the moment. Samuel, who, fortunately, for my shame, had a great respect for fear of this kind, had his bed removed accordingly into my room. He used to entertain me at night with stories of Barbadoes and the negroes; and in a few days I was reassured and happy.

It was then (oh, shame that I must speak of fair lady after confessing a heart so faint!)—it was then that I fell in love with my cousin Fan. However, I would have fought all her young acquaintances round for her, timid as I was, and little inclined to pugnacity.

Fanny was a lass of fifteen, with little laughing eyes, and a mouth like a plum. I was then (I feel as if I ought to be ashamed to say it) not more than thirteen, if so old; but I had read Tooke's *Pantheon*, and came of a precocious race. My cousin came of one too, and was about to be married to a handsome young fellow of three-and-twenty. I thought nothing of this, for nothing could be more innocent than my intentions. I was not old enough, or grudging enough, or whatever it was, even to be jealous. I thought everybody must love Fanny

Dayrell; and if she did not leave me out in permitting it, I was satisfied. It was enough for me to be with her as long as I could; to gaze on her with delight as she floated hither and thither; and to sit on the stiles in the neighbouring fields, thinking of Tooke's *Pantheon*. My friendship was greater than my love. Had my favourite school-fellow been ill, or otherwise demanded my return, I should certainly have chosen his society in preference. Three-fourths of my heart were devoted to friendship; the rest was in a vague dream of beauty, and female cousins, and nymphs, and green fields, and a feeling which, though of a warm nature, was full of fear and respect.

Had the jade put me on the least equality of footing as to age, I know not what change might have been wrought in me; but though too young herself for the serious duties she was about to bring on her, and full of sufficient levity and gaiety not to be uninterested with the little black-eyed schoolboy that lingered about her, my vanity was well paid off by hers; for she kept me at a distance by calling me *petit garçon*. This was no better than the assumption of an elder sister in her teens over a younger one; but the latter feels it, nevertheless; and I persuaded myself that it was particularly cruel. I wished the Abbé Paris at Jamaica with his French. There would she come in her frock and tucker (for she had not yet left off either), her curls dancing, and her hands clasped together in the enthusiasm of something to tell me, and when I flew to her, forgetting the difference of ages, and alive only to my charming cousin, she would repress me with a little fillip on the cheek, and say, "Well, *petit garçon*, what do you think of that?" The worst of it was, that this odious French phrase sat insufferably well upon her plump little mouth. She and I used to gather peaches before the house were up. I held the ladder for her; she mounted like a fairy; and when I stood doting on her as she looked down and threw the fruit in my lap, she would cry, "*Petit garçon*, you will let 'em all drop!" On my return to school, she gave me a locket for a keepsake, in the shape of a heart; which was the worst thing she ever did to the *petit garçon*, for it touched me on my weak side, and looked like a sentiment. I believe I should have had serious thoughts of becoming melancholy, had I not, in returning to

school, returned to my friend, and so found means to occupy my craving for sympathy. However, I wore the heart a long while. I have sometimes thought there was more in her French than I imagined; but I believe not. She naturally took herself for double my age, with a lover of three-and-twenty. Soon after her marriage, fortune separated us for many years. My passion had almost as soon died away; but I have loved the name of Fanny ever since; and when I met her again, which was under circumstances of trouble on her part, I could not see her without such an emotion as I was fain to confess to a person "near and dear," who forgave me for it; which made me love the forgiver the more. Yes! the "black ox" trod on the fairy foot of my light-hearted Cousin Fan; of her, whom I could no more have thought of in conjunction with sorrow, than of a ball-room with a tragedy. To know that she was rich and admired, and abounding in mirth and music, was to me the same thing as to know that she existed. How often did I afterwards wish myself rich in turn, that I might have restored to her all the graces of life! She was generous, and would not have denied me the satisfaction.

This was my first love. That for a friend's sister was my second, and not so strong; for it was divided with the admiration of which I have spoken for the park music and "the soldiers." Nor had the old tendency to mix up the clerical with the military service been forgotten. Indeed, I have never been without a clerical tendency; nor, after what I have written for the genial edification of my fellow-creatures, and the extension of charitable and happy thoughts in matters of religion, would I be thought to speak of it without even a certain gravity, not compromised or turned into levity, in my opinion, by any cheerfulness of tone with which it may happen to be associated; for heaven has made smiles as well as tears; has made laughter itself, and mirth; and to appreciate its gifts thoroughly is to treat none of them with disrespect, or to affect to be above them. The wholly gay and the wholly grave spirit is equally but half the spirit of a right human creature.

I mooted points of faith with myself very early, in consequence of what I heard at home. The very inconsistencies

which I observed and about me in matters of belief and practice, did but the more make me wish to discover in what the right spirit of religion consisted: while, at the same time, nobody felt more instinctively than myself, that forms were necessary to preserve essence. I had the greatest respect for them, wherever I thought them sincere. I got up imitations of religious processions in the school-room, and persuaded my coadjutors to learn even a psalm in the original Hebrew, in order to sing it as part of the ceremony. To make the lesson as easy as possible, it was the shortest of all the psalms, the hundred and seventeenth, which consists but of two verses. A Jew, I am afraid, would have been puzzled to recognize it; though, perhaps, I got the tone from his own synagogue; for I was well acquainted with that place of worship. I was led to dislike Catholic chapels, in spite of their music and their paintings, by what I had read of Inquisitions, and by the impiety which I found in the doctrine of eternal punishment—a monstrosity which I never associated with the Church of England, at least not habitually. But identifying no such dogmas with the Jews, who are indeed free from them (though I was not aware of that circumstance at the time), and reverencing them for their ancient connection with the Bible, I used to go with some of my companions to the synagogue in Duke's Place, where I took pleasure in witnessing the semi-Catholic pomp of their service, and in hearing their fine singing, not without something of a constant astonishment at their wearing their hats. This custom, however, kindly mixed itself up with the recollection of my cocked hat and band. I was not aware that it originated in the immovable Eastern turban.

These visits to the synagogue did me, I conceive, a great deal of good. They served to universalize my notions of religion, and to keep them unbigoted. It never became necessary to remind me that Jesus was himself a Jew. I have also retained through life a respectful notion of the Jews as a body.

There were some school rhymes about "pork upon a fork", and the Jews going to prison. At Easter, a strip of bordered paper was stuck on the breast of every boy, containing the words "He is risen." It did not give us the slightest thought.

of what it recorded. It only reminded me of an old rhyme which some of the boys used to go about the school repeating:—

He is risen, he is risen;  
All the Jews must go to prison."

A beautiful Christian deduction! Thus has charity itself been converted into a spirit of antagonism; and thus it is that the antagonism, in the progress of knowledge, becomes first a pastime and then a jest.

I never forgot the Jews' synagogue, their music, their tabernacle, and the courtesy with which strangers were allowed to see it. I had the pleasure, before I left school, of becoming acquainted with some members of their community, who were extremely liberal towards other opinions, and who, nevertheless, entertained a sense of the Supreme Being far more reverential than I had observed in any Christian, my mother excepted. My feelings towards them received additional encouragement from the respect shown to their history in the paintings of Mr. West, who was anything but a bigot himself, and who often had Jews to sit to him. I contemplated Moses and Aaron, and the young Levites, by the sweet light of his picture-rooms, where everybody trod about in stillness, as though it were a kind of holy ground; and if I met a Rabbi in the street, he seemed to me a man coming, not from Bishopsgate or Saffron Hill, but out of the remoteness of time.

I have spoken of the distinguished individuals bred at Christ Hospital, including Coleridge and Lamb, who left the school not long before I entered it. Coleridge I never saw till he was old. Lamb I recollect coming to see the boys, with a pensive, brown, handsome, and kindly face, and a gait advancing with a motion from side to side, between involuntary consciousness and attempted ease. His brown complexion may have been owing to a visit in the country; his air of uneasiness to a great burden of sorrow. He dressed with a quaker-like plainness. I did not know him as Lamb; I took him for a Mr. "Guy," having heard somebody address him by that appellation, I suppose in jest.

The boy whom I have designated in these notices as C——n, whose intellect in riper years became clouded, had a more



than usual look of being the son of old parents. He had a reputation among us which, in more superstitious times, might have rendered him an object of dread. We thought he knew a good deal out of the pale of ordinary inquiries. He studied the weather and the stars, things which boys rarely trouble their head with; and as I had an awe of thunder, which always brought a reverential shade on my mother's face, as if God had been speaking, I used to send to him on close summer days, to know if thunder was to be expected.

In connection with this mysterious schoolfellow, though he was the last person, in some respects, to be associated with him, I must mention a strange epidemic fear which occasionally prevailed among the boys respecting a personage whom they called the Fazzer.

The Fazzer was known to be nothing more than one of the boys themselves. In fact, he consisted of one of the most impudent of the bigger ones; but as it was his custom to disguise his face, and as this aggravated the terror which made the little boys hide their own faces, his participation of our common human nature only increased the supernatural fearfulness of his pretensions. His office as Fazzer consisted in being audacious, unknown, and frightening the boys at night; sometimes by pulling them out of their beds; sometimes by simply *fazzing* their hair ("fazzing" meant pulling or vexing, like a goblin); sometimes (which was horriblemst of all) by quietly giving us to understand, in some way or other, that the "Fazzer was out," that is to say, out of his own bed, and then being seen (by those who dared to look) sitting, or otherwise making his appearance, in his white shirt, motionless and dumb. It was a very good horror, of its kind. The Fazzer was our Dr. Faustus, our elf, our spectre, our Flibbertigibbet, who "put knives in our pillows and halters in our pews." He was Jones, it is true, or Smith; but he was also somebody else—an anomaly, a duality, Smith and sorcery united. My friend Charles Ollier should have written a book about him. He was our Old Man of the Mountain, and yet a common boy.

One night I thought I saw this phenomenon under circumstances more than usually unearthly. It was a fine moonlight

night; I was then in a ward the casements of which looked (as they still look) on the churchyard. My bed was under the second window from the east, not far from the statue of Edward the Sixth. Happening to wake in the middle of the night, and cast up my eyes, I saw, on a bed's head near me, and in one of these casements, a figure in its shirt, which I took for the Fizzer. The room was silent; the figure motionless; I fancied that half the boys in the ward were glancing at it, without daring to speak. It was poor, C——n, gazing at that lunar orb, which might afterwards be supposed to have malignantly fastinated him.

Contemporary with C——n was Wood, before mentioned, whom I admired for his verses, and who was afterwards Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, where I visited him, and found him, to my astonishment, a head shorter than myself. Every upper boy at school appears a giant to a little one. "Big boy" and senior are synonymous. Now and then, however, extreme smallness in a senior scholar gives a new kind of dignity, by reason of the testimony it bears to the ascendancy of the intellect. It was the custom for the monitors at Christ Hospital, during prayers before meat, to stand fronting the tenants of their respective wards, while the objects of their attention were kneeling. Looking up, on one of these occasions, towards a new monitor who was thus standing, and whose face was unknown to me (for there were six hundred of us, and his ward was not mine), I thought him the smallest boy that could ever have attained to so distinguished an eminence. He was little in person, little in face, and he had a singularly juvenile cast of features, even for one so *petit*.

It was Mitchell, the translator of *Aristophanes*. He had really attained his position prematurely. I rose afterwards to be next to him in the school; and from a grudge that existed between us, owing probably to a reserve, which I thought pride, on his part, and to an ardency which he may have considered frivolous on mine, we became friends. Circumstances parted us in after-life: I became a Reformist, and he a Quarterly Reviewer; but he sent me kindly remembrances not long before he died. I did not know he was declining; and it will ever be a pain to me to reflect that delay conspired with

accident to hinder my sense of it from being known to him; especially as I learned that he had not been so prosperous as I supposed. He had his weaknesses as well as myself, but they were mixed with conscientious and noble qualities. Zealous as he was for aristocratical government, he was no indiscriminate admirer of persons in high places; and, though it would have bettered his views in life, he had declined taking orders, from nicety of religious scruple. Of his admirable scholarship I need say nothing.

Equally good scholar, but of a less zealous temperament, was Barnes, who stood next me on the Deputy Grecian form, and who was afterwards identified with the sudden and striking increase of the *Times* newspaper in fame and influence. He was very handsome when young, with a profile of Grecian regularity; and was famous among us for a certain dispassionate humour, for his admiration of the works of Fielding, and for his delight, nevertheless, in pushing a narrative to its utmost, and drawing upon his stores of fancy for intensifying it; an amusement for which he possessed an understood privilege. It was painful in after-life to see his good looks swallowed up in corpulency, and his once handsome mouth thrusting its under lip out, and panting with asthma. I believe he was originally so well constituted in point of health and bodily feeling that he fancied he could go on all his life without taking any of the usual methods to preserve his comfort. The editorship of the *Times*, which turned his night into day, and would have been a trying burden to any man, completed the bad consequences of his negligence, and he died painfully before he was old. Barnes wrote elegant Latin verse, a classical English style, and might assuredly have made himself a name in wit and literature, had he cared much for anything beyond his glass of wine and his Fielding. He left money to found a Barnes scholarship at Cambridge.

What pleasant days have I not passed with him, and other schoolfellows, bathing in the New River, and boating on the Thames! He and I began to learn Italian together, and anybody not within the pale of the enthusiastic, might have thought us mad, as we went shouting the beginning of Metastasio's Ode to Venus, as loud as we could bawl over one

LEIGH HUNT

Hornsey fields. I can repeat it to this day, from those first lessons.

Scendi propizia  
Con tua splendore,  
O bella Venere,  
Madre d'Amore;  
Madre d'Amore,  
Che sola sei  
Piacere degli uomini,  
E degli dei."<sup>1</sup>

On the same principle of making invocations as loud as possible, and at the same time of fulfilling the prophecy of a poet, and also for the purpose of indulging ourselves with an echo, we used to lie upon our ears at Richmond, and call, in the most vociferous manner, upon the spirit of Thomson to "rest."

"Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore,  
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,  
And oft suspend the dashing oar  
To bid his gentle spirit rest."

—*Collins's Ode on the Death of Thomson.*

It was more like "perturbing" his spirit than laying it.

One day Barnes fell overboard, and, on getting into the boat again, he drew a little edition of Seneca out of his pocket, which seemed to have become fat with the water. It was like an extempore dropsy.

Another time, several of us being tempted to bathe on a very hot day, near Hammersmith, and not exercising sufficient patience in selecting our spot, we were astonished at receiving a sudden lecture from a lady. She was in a hat and feathers, and riding-habit; and as the grounds turned out to belong to the Margravine of Anspach (Lady Craven), we persuaded ourselves that our admonitrix, who spoke in no measured terms, was her Serene Highness herself. The obvious reply to her was, that if it was indiscreet in us not to have chosen a more sequestered spot, it was not excessively the reverse in a lady to come and rebuke us. I related this story to my acquaintance, Sir Robert Ker Porter, who knew her. His observation

<sup>1</sup>"Descend propitious with thy brightness, O beautiful Venus, Mother of Love;—Mother of Love, who alone art the pleasure of men and of

was, that nothing wonderful was wondered at by Margravine.

I was fifteen when I put off my band and blue skirts for a coat and neckcloth. I was then first Deputy Grecian, and I had the honour of going out of the school in the same rank, at the same age, and for the same reason, as my friend Lamb. The reason was, that I hesitated in my speeches, not so much as he, so badly as I used; and it is very seldom that I halt at a syllable now; but it was understood that a Grecian was bound to deliver a public speech before he left school, and to go into the Church afterwards; and as I could do neither of these things, a Grecian I could not be. So I put on my coat and waistcoat, and, what was stranger, my hat; a very uncomfortable addition to my sensations. For eight years I had gone bareheaded, save now and then a few inches of pericranium, when the little cap, no larger than a crummet, was stuck on one side, to the mystification of the old ladies in the streets.

I then cared as little for the rains as I did for anything else. I had now a vague sense of worldly trouble, and of a great and serious change in my condition; besides which I had to quit my old cloisters, and my playmates, and my habits of all sorts; so that what was a very happy moment to schoolboys in general, was to me one of the most painful of my life. I surprised my schoolfellows and the master with the melancholy of my tears. I took leave of my books, of my friends, of my seat in the grammar-school, of my good-hearted nurse and her daughter, of my bed, of the cloisters, and of the very pump out of which I had taken so many delicious draughts, as if I should never see them again, though I meant to come every day. The fatal hat was put on; my father was come to fetch me.

“We, hand in hand, with strange new steps and slow,  
Through Holborn took our meditative way.”

THE END.

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